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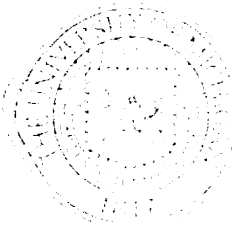
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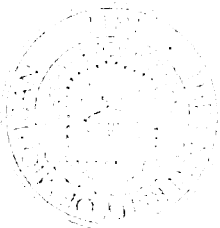
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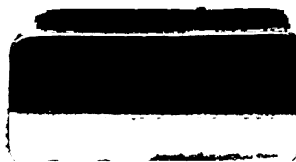
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The Freethinker

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IN his remarkable monastic autobiography, *Twelve Years in a Monastery*, the late Joseph McCabe concluded with a critical assessment of the future of the Roman Church and of its "infallible" chief, the Pope. McCabe's conclusion, based upon his exceptional knowledge of the practical working and theological teaching of the Church to which he had formerly belonged, was that by the end of this century, the then president of the Catholic Church would bear a generally analogous relationship to Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) as by the same date the social democratic president of the then German Republic would bear to Kaiser Wilhelm II (1888-1918). For in both cases, so McCabe predicted, the mediævally-derived regimes of pope and kaiser would have given way to democratic regimes of a more modern character.

The Second Vatican Council and the Papacy

This intriguing prediction of the former Father Anthony, seems already to be in process of effective fulfilment. For at least as regards the German empire, the mediæval Hohenzollern dynasty has long since vanished from the map of Europe, and the bones of the last German kaiser moulder in foreign soil. It is true that the German Social Democratic Party—in its heyday the classic party of orthodox Marxism—has been nowadays superseded in that role and even within the confines of the German Reich has not quite made good its claim to be the authentic successor of the Hohenzollern kaisers.

However, it may still do so; and in any case the restoration of the monarchy in Germany seems to be definitely out of the question either now or at any foreseeable time. Regarding what was when McCabe wrote, the strongest and best-organised monarchical regime in Europe, McCabe's prediction may be said to have been already fulfilled. Will it also prove true with regard to the Papacy? Will what Lord Macaulay once described as "the most august dynasty on earth" also succumb to the changing facts of human evolution and develop into a democratic regime of the modern type? This question is not merely an academic one for, in particular since Pope John reassembled the Vatican Council (adjourned *sine die* in 1870) signs have been multiplying which indicate that the papal autocracy of the Counter-Reformation (which—mainly due to the untiring efforts of the Jesuits—received its final seal and official confirmation at the time of the original Vatican Council of 1870) is nowadays approaching its end.

It was the Papacy itself, then represented by that very remarkable pope, John XXIII (whom future historians will surely regard as one of the greatest popes) which initially called together the second Vatican Council, yet since the accession of the suave and subtle ex-papal career diplomatist, Cardinal Montini, the initiative appears quite unmistakably to have passed from the Papacy to the Council. And throughout the sequential sessions of the Council, power has been passing steadily from the formerly all-powerful and ultra-conservative Roman Italian-domi-

nated Curia (the ecclesiastical "Whitehall" of the Papacy) to the bishops, who represent the overwhelming non-Italian majority of the Church and who are necessarily far more closely in touch with present-day social and cultural developments in all parts of the world.

The already announced intention of Pope Paul to set up a permanent advisory senate of bishops as a kind of apparently permanent ecclesiastical parliament to advise the Papacy would appear destined to foreshadow the perhaps gradual evaporation of the papal autocracy, traditionally based on the centralising despotism of the Curia in Rome, and its also perhaps slow but eventually sure reversion to the ecclesiastical equivalent of

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Future of the Papacy

By F. A. RIDLEY

a constitutional monarchy. For it must always be remembered that papal infallibility *de jure* as defined in the Infallibility Decree of July 10th, 1870, is of comparatively recent origin—and, rather ironically, the result not so much of the efforts of the Papacy itself, but rather of the Jesuits who, ever since the Council of Trent at the Counter-Reformation (mid-16th century), have steadily advanced their own power under cover of advancing that of the Papacy. To adopt the apt analogy of a German (Protestant) historian of the Papacy: ever since the Counter-Reformation, the all-powerful successors of Loyola, so often the *real* rulers of the Church, have effectively transformed the pope into the role of the king upon the chess board; into a figure of majesty that nominally dominates the board, but in reality has little power of independent movement and has in practice frequently (as at the First Vatican Council of 1870), been little more than a papal puppet of the "black pope", i.e., the General of the Jesuits (Cf. Gustav Krueger—*History of the Papacy*).

For it must not be forgotten that papal *de facto* autocracy and *de jure* infallibility reality only date from the Counter Reformation along with the Jesuits themselves. In the Middle Ages, general councils asserted their independence of popes and even deposed them (as at the Council of Constance in 1415). And even in post-Reformation times, the powerful French Church energetically repudiated the dogma of papal infallibility, an opposition continued even in the first Vatican Council, which finally proclaimed the dogma (Cf. Pompanio Leto—*Six Months at Rome*).

New Trends in the Papacy

At present it would appear to be sufficiently clear that the Church of Rome, and the Papacy along with it, are moving into a new era. The often sensational developments at the present Council, if they do nothing else, at least afford fresh and striking proofs of that recurring resiliency that already in 1840 Lord Macaulay, had noted as the underlying characteristic of the Papacy.

Two new trends currently making their presence felt are the growing power of the hitherto immobile laity (now organised in Catholic Action and already vocal at the Council) and the dawning cosmopolitan trend inaugurated by Pope Paul's successive visits to Palestine and to India. The traditional role of the pope as both the centre of

the exclusive Roman Curia and as the erstwhile "prisoner of the Vatican", cannot fail to be profoundly modified by these growing trends. For it seems clear that (as, indeed, McCabe also predicted) the Catholic laity will no longer accept their traditional passive role as eternally subordinate to the clerical caste.

Similarly, recent papal peregrinations beyond the confines of Europe, show unmistakably that the "infallible" Papacy has its ears close to the ground, and is keenly

cognisant that the centres of world power are changing; that the influential centres of influence are no longer as in past centuries exclusively confined to the white races and to the civilisation of European origin. Future successors of St. Peter may be Asiatic or African.

Both the above developments must surely exert a profound influence upon the future evolution of the Papacy, and Joseph McCabe's prediction may well prove to be correct.

Whom the Gods Love

By H. CUTNER

OVER a number of years I received cuttings from readers, and I read a number of articles myself, regarding the "miraculous" cure of a Miss Dorothy Kerin who, when she was only 22, was dying from tuberculous peritonitis, and had been given up by nine doctors. How did I explain it?

Naturally, I could not explain it, for I was not in possession of the facts; but as I did not believe in miracles, or in the supernatural, I was quite convinced that if she had been cured of anything at all, there was nothing miraculous about it.

What were the facts as we had them from Miss Kerin herself? It appears that when waiting for the inevitable end, her mother and other children saw her open her eyes which were "blue and bright and strange"; she called out, "Don't you hear?" and, "I am well, I must get up and walk", which thereupon she did. "I am hungry", added Dorothy—and she was completely cured.

She maintained that it was God Almighty, or Jesus, or the Holy Ghost, or an angel—it depended on which account one read—who told her to get up and walk, and though other doctors were consulted, the fact remains that Miss Kerin was cured. Not only that; she was sure that she had been called back from death for a "special purpose". She was, "through God, to heal others."

Within a year—so we are told—she began "healing", and soon she was taken up by "the wealthy, the influential and by prominent churchmen"; she even addressed meetings. But it was not until 1923 that she considered herself ready for her great healing campaign, which began in Ealing at the Chapel House, with the full backing of the then Archbishop of Canterbury, three bishops, and five Harley Street doctors, as well as various "English aristocrats and foreign princesses". No wonder that her story was eagerly publicised, not once, but over and over again. It was too good for any journalist to miss.

She cured dozens of people, old and young, who all poured gifts and money into the chapel. Soon, so great was the crush (or rush) for her healing powers that five houses and a resident chaplain were added to the chapel; and later, Miss Kerin moved to a large mansion, Burrswood, which stood in a 250-acre estate. Thenceforth, Miss Kerin's story was one of tremendous success in healing the sick and the incurable. In fact, apart from the numerous articles about her, TV claimed her, and we got some wonderful shots of a very gracious lady and her blue-eyed innocence, her healing chapel, her chaplain and resident doctor, and at least a few of the very grateful people she had healed. The charm and beauty of it all, infused with reverence and holiness, should have overwhelmed me when I saw the divine show, but they didn't. I was certain however that Miss Kerin was quite sure of her holy mission

on earth—self-mesmerised I would rather call it. But I might well have been deceived.

Not long after her TV appearance, Miss Kerin died very suddenly in 1963, and some of the lavish obituary notices underestimated the "supernatural" in her life, or thought it best to ignore it. For myself, I was fairly sure at the time that the spate of articles about her would not cease, and I was right. In the *Sunday Express* (November 8th) nearly a whole page was devoted to her by Dr. Cedric Carne, embellished with a photograph of Miss Kerin and some children she had adopted. It bore the headline—"The strange healing powers of a woman's hands".

As Miss Kerin had healed a woman who had a "lump"—it may have been cancer—and a boy of four who had been blind for two years, Dr. Carne went to see how they were some years after being cured. The lady had had no more trouble, and the boy could see perfectly. In other cases, he found that the doctors were amazed, always amazed.

But all these cures and the upkeep of the healing chapel together cost money, and there were 25 people working there. Moreover, Miss Kerin built a new church which cost over £30,000. Yet money flowed in continuously, and some of us at least are not surprised when, after her sudden death, it was found she had amassed £180,580 and left no will.

Dr. Carne accepted the truth of the cures he himself had followed up but was alas sceptical about their being "supernatural"; and this in spite of the fact that eminent churchmen and doctors all supported Miss Kerin, and evidently thoroughly believed in her healing hands. He listed some of the people who helped her in her healing work—or perhaps it was only financially—and among them we find Dr. Hopewell-Ash, Dr. Leonard Browne, Lord Horder, Dr. Burnett Rae, and Dr. Maurice Wright; and I find it most difficult to understand how, with such a galaxy of medical opinion behind her, he remains "sceptical" about her healing powers—or even that she had been ill herself. If she had, then it was possible that she had been only "an hysteric"—though he was not sure.

For my own part, I am sure and always have been, that all over the world people have been cured by all sorts of drugs and herbs, by hypnosis, by cold water treatments, by suggestion, and even by witch doctors. The veritable cures are actually precious few, but they always make a big splash. The millions who are never cured are utterly ignored by doctors, priests, and parsons alike and this is the case with Lourdes. We rarely, if ever, get the names of the unfortunates who die in spite of the laying on of hands, the massage with olive oil, or the prayers of earnest believers.

Whom the gods love . . . !

German War Crimes

By GERDA GUTTENBERG (Nürnberg)

I send the following as a contribution to the discussions at present taking place on the formal prolongation of prosecutions for war-crimes, and the Catholic attitude towards National Socialism, as openly discussed since Hochhuth's *The Representative*. (Certainly this play could not have been published if Protestant circles had not backed the author).

The 20-year rule which applies for murder in Germany, will free all those from prosecution who committed crimes during the 12-years of the Third Reich, but succeeded in obtaining documentary papers, changed their names or escaped to foreign countries. All those could feel free to shed their camouflage by May 1965 and jeopardise that fragrant blossom of democracy established in Western Germany after World War II.

From this point of view and generally speaking, there is practically no reason why this 20-year rule should not be prolonged in advance to 30 years, as the reform bill (under discussion for years) provides anyway.

The real problem, however, lies elsewhere. As the once assistant prosecutor at the Nürnberg Trials in 1945 to 1948, Dr. Robert Kemptner (now an attorney in the United States), said on December 3rd—only a few weeks ago—at a lecture given at Nürnberg: "The belatedly installed research institution at Ludwigsburg, working since 1958, is hopelessly understaffed. They will not be in a position to cope with the truck loads of documentary material. More could be achieved only if, in the future, sufficient personnel worked on those documents offered from the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Russia, Hungary, and elsewhere." He pointed out that staffs of those ministries, and the personnel surrounding the Führer, who dealt with "the East" had not even been scrutinised, less still had anybody been put on trial.

However, one basic consideration must be made first. The Bundesrepublik was allowed by Western consent to grow into another stronghold against "the East". A lot of people active during the Third Reich, experts on "the East", whose services cannot be disposed of, are most actively holding this present bulwark again.

Kemptner had to admit that pressure groups in Western Germany forced the liberation of thousands of convicted in 1949 to 1952 for reasons of remilitarisation of this country—for another spearhead against "the East". All those already tried at that time, or under prosecution, and released in spite of all, cannot be put to trial again: *non bis in idem*!

How can you accuse the military personnel of the Hitler army, when they are now trainers and officers of the new army? How put blame on those in industry and administration who helped to rebuild capitalism, the stronghold against "the East"?

It was one of those treacheries and trickeries that will not be forgotten in this country, that the churches escaped any purgatory measures after the war. Now more material is coming to light on the role the churches played in Hitler Germany and the support they gave him. In 1945 and during the decisive years right after the war, they were in a position not only to whitewash their own clergy and lay helpers, but all those who in past or present or future might assist their aims. They produced, what the people called "Persil-Scheine" keeping those who were hypocritical enough to return to the church they had left. Thus not only did important Nazis escape

measures; back they often were in some favoured position.

Small wonder that rightist groups now ask for a general amnesty. The more so as they consider those war crimes committed under political circumstances, not threatened by penal code paragraphs. They point to Dresden, where almost a million Germans died because the city had to be flattened. The Russians planned to put up their headquarters there! They stress that no war trials had been staged against those who built and permitted the use of atomic bombs on Japan. They point to the crimes those suffered who had to leave their homes in East Prussia, Silesia, Sudetenland. They point to warlike actions in Korea, Vietnam, Algeria, Congo, Suez, Cuba, Angola, etc., and ask who was held responsible, or will be held responsible?

Those martyrs of the Church who lived and died in concentration camps were individuals opposing their Church. The Church was claiming them as it has claimed others. When in 1933 the socialists and liberals began to move out of their positions everywhere, Catholics in large numbers moved in, took over Jewish stores and shops. No bishop protested against euthanasia, as long as only state-owned infirmaries were closed and cleared. It was 18 months after the action started that the bishop Graf von Galen protested: when church-owned institutions were at stake and with it church income!

To believe that National Socialism was a unique ideology is mistaken. It was a collection of resentment groups, some with the intention of re-establishing a Germany as in 1914, some for expanding towards the east for economic or ideological reasons. By far the strongest pressure group was the Catholic bloc. The barons of the Rhine and the Ruhr were all Catholics, and had strongly supported Hitler ever since World War I was lost, and they recognised that sooner or later he would attract all those who were dissatisfied with the Weimar Republic.

Two eminent war criminals, Schacht and von Papen, put on trial at 1945, were released: because of international backing.

Von Papen gave a speech on November 9th, 1933, three days before the election, which when successful, brought a merging of state and party, thus overruling the Weimar Constitution.

Among many other things he said in this lecture:

"The get-together of Catholic ideology and National Socialism must be welcomed wholeheartedly. It does not mean an acceptance of promising conditions, but a fully-fledged basic agreement with all elements of National Socialism... As the Holy Father said on October 29th, 1933: 'Heavy though the hour seems to be, great hopes will come out of it'... We have to face facts seemingly unavoidable in the sequence of a great revolution. They may bring duress and misery personally, Christian love may deplore them, but they must be understood from a healthy standpoint of sternness and intolerance, without which no mental changes ever have been accomplished... German Catholicism has to understand that in the November 12th election it must be found in the front line against the era of liberalism... it has to decide for a return to the natural order, as provided by God. There is no comparison with the position of Catholics during the Weimar Republic. The apparent outer freedom they enjoyed, the subsidies they were given for organisations and institu-

(Concluded on page 7)

This Believing World

It must have been a dreadful admission for the Christian writer of the London *Evening News* (December 12th) "Saturday Reflection" to say—and at Christmas time too—that Christianity "has produced no modern Utopia because it has never promised anything of the sort". But is it not Utopia to sit with Jesus in Heaven for eternity? Really, the way in which genuine Christians are denigrating their own sacred religion staggers us.

★

Whether there ever was an "Atlantis" or not is still hotly discussed, though the preponderance of opinion is that this great Atlantic continent is purely mythical. Be that as it may, there is, according to *The People* (December 27th) a Church of Atlantis in Hertfordshire with the Rev. Father Laurence as its Hierarch, and on Sundays, it holds a solemn communion of remembrance and a liturgy and meditation, among its other sacred services. Its creed is particularly holy.

★

With other solemn declarations it has, "I believe in the Divine Triad of God, the Father-Mother-Son, Three perfect Beings in One, who doth dwell in Divine Heaven." Mr. Laurence himself is Osiris-Isis, though why Horus is not added is perhaps one of those theological puzzles never to be solved by blatant unbelievers. In any case, *The People* calls his holy faith a "weird religion"! What an understatement!

★

It is bad enough to have the usual troubles in a Church—the question of unity, or whether the Jews did or did not crucify Jesus. But for a bishop to have to reprimand a vicar because he no longer believes in baptism is a little too much. The Rev. R. Vick of Westcliffe, Essex, claims that there is no proof that "infant baptism is agreeable to the Word of God", and therefore he is baptising no more babies in his church. Naturally, his bishop (of Chelmsford) is furious, and instead of turning the other cheek, threatens to sack him. And Mr. Vick is ready to go. A curious thing about the affair is that Mr. Vick's own children were baptised. But these baptisms "no longer count", he says. If they insist on being "re-baptised" when older, they will (we are told) have their parents' blessing!

★

Although the Bishop of Woolwich appears to be very heretical, he has not so far given up either God or Jesus, both of whom are alive somewhere. And in the *Sunday Mirror* (December 5th) he deals with the Second Advent—"Will Christ really return to Earth? Needless to say, he pours scorn on the pious Christians who really believe in this "mumbo jumbo" as he calls it. "And he insists that no "intelligent" Christian believes it. What the Second Coming really means, he declares, is that "Christ must come into everything"—a proposition which millions of Christians no doubt will find even sillier than the idea of a Second Coming.

★

Daisy Loman, writing from Paris on December 18th to the *Guardian* had a sensible suggestion that the Crathorne Committee seemed to have overlooked—that libraries should be open on Sundays. "Neither the amount of extra employment involved nor the risk of noisy crowds would be very large," she said, "and reading is eminently a Sunday occupation." Yes, even the Sabbatarians read on the Lord's day, though rather restrictedly.

Waste

To have to admit failure and defeat after four and a half years of hard work and considerable expenditure of money, (£30,000) is a discouraging state of affairs, but one can only agree with the Rector of Woolwich in the, for him, depressing conclusion that the Christian Church can "never again be the centre of urban community life." In his article "Failure of a Mission" (*The Observer Supplement* December 6th, 1964) he stated that the ecclesiastical structures that have served society fairly well for hundreds of years are becoming "increasingly irrelevant, and secular ones determine the shape and tone of society". The Rector believes that the affairs of the Christian Church will become more difficult still, as formal Christianity disappears and is replaced by secularisation of the community. A very true assessment.

Apparently the concentrated efforts of a high-powered team of clergy in Woolwich have achieved little. Especially so in the field of infant baptism. Spectacularly arranged christenings with processions of mothers have failed to entice the parents to become churchgoers. They apparently look upon baptism as some sort of initiation ceremony these days, which has to be gone through to render the child socially "with it" and that is the end of it. Even parish suppers, coach outings, and theatre visits have proved futile. The old "bread and circuses" trick has lost its magic it seems, as has house to house visiting. Conversion of the side aisles of the large church into a coffee bar and lounge have met the same fate as far as the religious life of the parish is concerned. People are just not interested any more, and it seems a shocking waste of talent that a team of young men with high university degrees should spend their days trying to bolster up a dying cause.

It is hardly surprising that Christianity, which has been a persecuting religion during most of its existence, and has never been forthright in condemnation of war, should now be treated with scepticism and distrust when it seeks to present itself as a model of loving-kindness, all sweetness and light. Urban industrial and scientifically educated populations, which have mainly replaced the agrarian superstitious and illiterate peasantry of medieval Europe can no longer tolerate the unsupported, self-constituted authority of the early Christian Fathers assisted by the pious fictions of monkish writers. To say, as the Rector does, that the people need God is just nonsense. Human affairs would have been in a lamentable state if reliance had been placed solely on gods, the Christian God included. Everything beneficial to man has been achieved by his own efforts, often in the face of tremendous difficulties and tough opposition from the Church, and people are beginning to realise it.

The inability of both Anglican and Roman Churches to come to terms with the needs of the modern world becomes more apparent every day. The Rector of Woolwich is not alone in trying to cope unsuccessfully with this problem. After an expensive and largely ineffectual Ecumenical Council, the Pope himself has had to take to the road, and try what effect a little spectacular salesmanship will have upon an unsuspecting and partly illiterate India.

When Marsiglio of Padua wrote his *Defensor Pacis* in 1324 (for which he was excommunicated) he visualised the "secular state as the only cohesive force which could create a civilised life for man on earth" and he advocated the exclusion of the Church from all civil power and jurisdiction. "Failure of a Mission" gives some indication that Marsiglio's ideal may be approaching fulfilment.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

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North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY

INDOOR

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, January 3rd, 6.30 p.m.: F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT, "Morals, Religion and Education."

Notes and News

MONICA FURLONG, a member of the BBC's Central Religious Advisory Committee, believes that "the kernel of the joy and happiness of Christmas" lies in what she called the "vulnerability" of Jesus (*Radio Times*, 17/12/64). "He arrived in the world as naked and helpless as all the rest of us", wrote Miss Furlong (apparently overlooking the supernatural protection afforded to the Son of God) but "unlike the rest of us remained for the whole of his life without defences." We, on the contrary, "fence ourselves round with various devices to keep other human beings at bay." Perhaps, then, Miss Furlong concluded, "glad tidings of great joy" means "no more than breaking out of our private loneliness and learning to live with one another." Which is hardly the traditional (Christian) Christmas message.

★

CHRISTIANITY took another beating in *Not So Much a Programme* on December 20th. Not only did playwright Peter Shaffer repeat his historical criticism ("By their fruits..."), novelist Brigid Brophy made the more fundamental criticism that it simply wasn't true—no more so than the stories of Zeus. Miss Brophy rightly contested the Rev. Nicholas Stacey's claims that the Church had been the pioneer in education, medicine and other fields. But these were secondary to the question of its truth or falsehood. A rather stunned Mr. Stacey asked if she could disprove the story of Christ. No, said Miss Brophy, but neither can I disprove those of Zeus.

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SAN FRANCISCO City Council finally voted to accept a gift of \$10,840 to set up a voluntary family planning clinic at the General Hospital, *Church and State* reported

(November, 1964). The Roman Catholic mayor, John F. Shelley, had "knocked the item out of the city's budget, but Mrs. Henriette de S. Lehman stepped forward with a donation for the programme." Mrs. Clarissa McMahon, a Catholic member of the Finance Committee, voted against accepting the gift on the grounds that the clinic might be "hopelessly overcrowded."

★

IN a letter to the *Guardian* (17/12/64), W. Barrett of Belfast described Northern Ireland as a place where "the Victorian Sunday to a large extent, still holds sway." Churches of all denominations are packed twice daily on the Sabbath, no public houses are open, and it is difficult until late in the afternoon to find a filling station open. Worse still—as other papers have noted recently—the swings in children's playgrounds in Belfast are padlocked. Three members of the Queen's University staff, including a professor, attempted to cut the chains with a hacksaw in protest, and the absurd restriction has been debated in Belfast City Council. Fifteen of the controlling Unionist councillors promptly walked out. Anyway, as the *Belfast Telegraph* remarked, Ulster people can go about their Sabbath without the Crathorne report spoiling their day, for its terms of reference "do extend beyond the pagan borders of England and Wales."

★

ANOTHER letter in the *Guardian* (17/12/64) pointed out some deficiencies of the report. You seek in vain, wrote David J. F. Pollock of Kent, for the principles that guided the Crathorne Committee's recommendations. It has "merely taken each law in turn and decided whether or not it should be changed... instead of adopting some such basic principles as that religious observances should not... be enforced by the law; and that it is restrictions in the law, not relaxations, that need justification." If the Committee had done this, we should not have new anomalies about the AAA being allowed to stage an athletics match on a Sunday but professional football being forbidden.

★

ULSTERMEN might have nothing to fear from the Crathorne report, but Scotsman should be gravely concerned, according to the Rev. Murdoch Campbell of Ross-shire (*The Scotsman*, 16/12/64). True the report referred "at the moment" only to England and Wales, but it had come as "a grave shock to many thousands of Christian people"—north of the border as well as south. For Mr. Campbell, "the Sabbath law is an integral part of God's moral law for all mankind": the words "Remember the Sabbath day for keep it holy" stand in the same moral context as "Thou shalt not kill". And at a time when "our moral and spiritual foundations are rapidly disintegrating... it ill becomes those who are, under God, entrusted with the preservation of our great Christian heritage, to open wider the gates of moral desecration".

★

UNDER the heading "Bishop on 1944 Act Burden", the *Catholic Herald* (18/12/64) reported on the proposed new Roman Catholic school at Kettering which is expected to cost £70,000. Bishop Parker of Northampton had expressed the hope that some British Government or other would see fit to amend the 1944 Education Act with regard to voluntary-aided schools. "With the great increases in population in the area", the Bishop said, "new schools are needed. Yet the Church cannot get Government help to build them—all the money for this school will have to be found privately." Such burden as there is on Catholics with regard to denominational schools is, we may say, self imposed: the unjustified burden is on the rest of the community.

Rome's "New" Morality

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

WHY do people become Catholics? Old-fashioned Protestant notions are that it is because the music or the sensuousness of Rome's worship attracts them. It is very plain that people who think along these lines can hardly even have been inside a Catholic church. In a cathedral, the distance of the laity from the sanctuary, and the slow pace of the liturgy, make it very difficult to follow, while the very perfunctory nature of the manner in which low mass is said in the ordinary parish church—some scruffy acolyte barely able to give the responses—has little to attract the senses. The fact is, as Ronald Knox wrote in *The Belief of Catholics*, this is but the shop window, and "our High Church friends do it as well or better". The Church counsels considerable self-control, even for the laity, and in the religious life, a highly articulated asceticism. Only through the purgative way, is it possible to reach the illuminative way.

Is it then due to the historic grandeur and majesty of the Church, of which a committed Catholic will speak with love in his eyes, and holy fervour in his voice? Certainly the very age and continuity of the Church can attract those with an historic sense; Catholic apologists are wont to quote Macaulay's famous passage—out of context. They do not avert to the more critical words which follow! "Who is She that stands united? triumphant?" before whom "empires rise and sink like billows". Examine some of the *realpolitik* of the Roman Church and it becomes clear that her amazing recuperative powers are due not to a promise that God shall be with His Church all days so that even the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, but to natural means—the active rethinking of its position in every age and clime. A considerable amount of such thinking has, of course, taken place at the recent Vatican Council.

It is here, I should suggest, that Rome's chief attraction lies for the better and more thoughtful minds among us. Augustine of Hippo—whose *Confessions* are a classic analysis of the motives, hidden and apparent, of the human heart—turned from the sensuousness and lust of his youth, to purity and abnegation in his Christian days. As many before, and many since, he was attracted by the twin powers of unchangeableness and adaptability, of the Church. "O Beauty ever ancient, ever new," he cried.

There are some minds to whom to be in doubt about certain fundamental questions of life seems intolerable. It is hard to see why this is so. An adult and educated person, even if he is not an Agnostic, has to live with his own ignorance in many fields and departments of life. An Agnostic faces with equanimity, even rejoicing, the fact that there are no hard and fast rules laid down for us in most of these departments of life, according to his way of looking at things. An old rhymster in *The Reasoner*, the 19th-century rationalist magazine of George Jacob Holyoake and his brother Austin, wrote:

Our ingress into life is naked and bare,
Our progress through life is trouble and care;
Our egress out of it, we know not where.
But doing well here we shall do well there;
I could not tell more by preaching a year.

Such words are compatible with humanism and rationalism; even, for that matter, with Christianity. But the Christian is not content to leave it at that. For him the next world is a fact, and preparation for it depends absolutely on our behaviour here—in the family, in any number of voluntary and obligatory societies, and in

society at large. The Church teaches that to her God gave, once and for all, on Sinai, and then, enlarged upon in the New Testament, the "means whereby we shall be saved." To this extent morality is ever ancient, it cannot change. But new conditions require it to be worked out afresh by casuists and theologians in every age. There is, in short, *development* in moral theology and Christian sociology, and how this is done, for the reasoning and educated laity, may be seen in such works as those as *Society and Sanity* and *Theology and Sanity* by Frank Sheed.

Their starting point is the social nature of man. Man, even in order to survive, to develop to his full stature certainly, needs society. Man only becomes human, writes Sheed, in so far as he lives in society. Within the context of this necessary society, how then is the old morality to be applied to the changing conditions of today? Before it can answer these questions, the Church has to examine in what way, precisely, conditions have changed since, say, the French Revolution.

The French Revolution surged forward with the great rallying slogan "*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*." The ideas of the French Revolution—this is a commonplace among Catholic historians such as Belloc and Christopher Dawson—have not yet "worked themselves out". I do not think this notion is so common among non-Catholic historians, who are committed to theories of linear progress, or at any rate do not envisage European history as a struggle between the domination of the Church and secular forces. The Catholics consider this slogan ridiculous. Men are plainly not equal, and never can be, for it is against nature. English Catholics may quote the Conservative Burke in their support. Liberty is not wholly possible, for society needs law and order. And finally it follows, if liberty and equality be impossible, so must be fraternity. If this seems a pessimistic viewpoint, we should remember that those who express it believe in original sin. And the Catholic will tell us that ours is the pessimistic view; the gospel brings redemption to fallen man worked out in Catholic social principles.

Look around the world of today, says the Catholic, and we have an "explosion of knowledge." We have sex equality, or very nearly so, and a new equality between the generations, needing a new rationale. Such things may be the fruits of protestantism, agnosticism, and the interplay of economic forces (it is very dubious if there would have been anything like the equality that exists, between the sexes, and between the generations, if the strict doctrines of Catholicism had been adhered to in Western Europe during the last couple of centuries) but—the necessary progress in this field having been achieved by the wicked heretics and unbelievers—the Catholics play their old dodge of baptising the results, and banishing the authors to the outer darkness.

Now, because man is a social being, society must take the blame in part, for his misdeeds, in addition to whatever blame may fairly be apportioned him. This is the doctrine of collective responsibility. Confessions of sin in Christian services very often speak in the plural. We are members one of another; no members of the Mystical body of Christ can suffer, or do wrong, without all the others likewise suffering. With those conditions of human life which change then, morality changes; but, in so far as human nature is unchangeable, morality does not change.

Not even the Ten Commandments are absolute. They have been in the Protestant tradition, which rejected the authority of the interpreting Church, but not in the Catholic. Our morality *appears* to be under change, argues the Catholic, because we have not established the conditions for morality.

All this talk about morality, still more about moral obligations will seem strange to freethinking ears. But it is important we should understand how it concerns the Catholic thinker today. For, he says, we must see what the new conditions are; we must safeguard long-term interests when threatened by short-term impulses. In short, the Catholic Church is up to the old trick of working out to what extent she must move with the times in order not to be engulfed by them, and in what manner her accommodations must be made in order to safeguard those things she has always felt to be basic.

When, therefore, the Catholic Church concerns itself—to give one instance—with the problem of contraception, it is not just trying to come to grips with the fact that 40 per cent of Catholic laity is believed to use forbidden methods, or with its seeming callousness to problems of world hunger. The issues lie deeper than this. It is the eternal problem of reshaping modern man to eternal needs and unchanging morality. This is where Freethinkers need to be on the look-out. The Church is not striving to achieve a “new look”; she is on a salvaging expedition. Those would-be converts who cannot be lured by music or liturgy, or even historic continuity, but who are led away by theories of development in morality, may do well to remind themselves how old, indeed, morality can be.

GERMAN WAR CRIMES

(Concluded from page 3)

tions of all kinds were basically achieved through liberalism, a state that allowed political Catholicism a strong position, but resulted in a neutral state, which allowed likewise liberties to atheistic movements... We must admit with courage that National Socialism will restore the world order as we see it and as it is set up by God... The pillars of National Socialism comprise family, community, and nation, engagement and authority... Destiny enabled me, to assist on January 30th this year in establishing this government of national resurrection...”

Von Papen succeeded in getting a high pension from this state. He was honoured by the Papal See with its highest order.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Secular Society was held at 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1 on December 16th. Present: Mr. D. Tribe, (President) in the chair, Messrs Barker, Collins, Condon, Ebury, Hornibrook, Kuebart, Michael, Millar, Miller, Shannon, Sproule, Timmins, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. McIlroy, Mrs. Venton, the Treasurer (Mr. Griffiths), and the Secretary.

The Chairman welcomed Mr. W. Collins, who was attending his first Executive Committee as representative of the Manchester branch.

A report on Secular Education Month (November) was given. Meetings had been reported in nearly 50 newspapers, and the campaign mentioned on several radio and television programmes. The final meeting at the Alliance Hall, London, had been exceedingly well attended, and had been filmed by Independent Television.

Three new branches had been formed recently, and the largest number of new members for several years enrolled. The financial report was accepted. It was decided to apply for permission to hold a rally in Trafalgar Square, London, to mark the centenary of the Society, and the International Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers in 1966.

The next meeting was arranged for January 20th, 1965.

Points From New Books

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

I HAVE written before in this paper about the historical novels of Peter Vansittart. His latest, *The Lost Lands* (Macmillan, 21s.), is set in fourteenth century Europe and is as brilliantly packed as ever with priests who have good reasons for doing evil things (“Slavery is no offence to God to Whom all men are slaves, etc.”), and mysterious Templars who commit dire sins to prove their nobility in the Christian hierarchy. Indeed the book has a wonderful texture of dread and superstition and an astringency. For instance: “In late summer Plague had ridden through Angiers, a punishment, priests declared, for fornication and tolerance too often shown to Jews. But it was often maintained that, as priests were seen to die as painfully as anyone else, the scourge was as much due to the sins of the Church.”

Having been impressed by Andrew Sinclair's *The Raker* (noticed in these columns in the issue dated November 13th), I've been looking up some of his previous novels. There are certainly plenty of bright laughs in *My Friend Judas* (Faber, 15s.): and I particularly like the hero's gimmick of putting up “inspired” quotes in his sitting room:

I always thought that Jesus Christ was a snubby or I should not have worshipped him if I thought he had been one of those long spindled nose rescals [Blake].

I have not had the pleasure of reading previous novels by Christopher Short, author of *The Black Room* (Cape 21s.): but now I intend to do so. The new story approaches a scandal in the eighteen nineties when the Archduke Friedrich George was found drowned with two other men in less than three feet of water. Official circles hushed up the mystery; but the novel purports to present a diary from which the astute reader can entertain himself by guessing at the scandalous truth, and also remind himself that many Germans believe that any transgressions can be permitted in the sacred cause of duty. Finally, the reader is left to question whether means sanctify the end, and to wonder whether it is true that those whom the gods wish to destroy they first make alive.

The fictional diary, although it reveals the character of an ambiguous aristocrat, is full of witty and profound observations, and many thoughts will appeal to free-thinkers. For instance: “The idea that children are born with natural sin (and in it) was, of course, invented by the Church to excuse the shortcomings of its members. In the Middle Ages even popes could give way to greed, lust and murder, assuaging their guilty consciences with the comforting doctrine that man is naturally sinful and all one need do is to shrive oneself in time before one dies in order to go to Heaven. Churchmen today are not much better—although murder is no longer fashionable—and they conduct their little ‘affairs’ more discreetly.”

“All along the line we adopted pagan customs,” writes the Archduke, “pretending that they were Christian in order to seduce ignorant fools from their own religions.” So he says: “There has probably never been a more unscrupulous religion than Christianity. The end, which we admit to be unknown and unknowable, has always justified the means for Christians.”

OBITUARY

We regret to announce the death, at the age of 73 of Leslie Allcock, a popular and respected member of Nottingham branch of the National Secular Society. When a young man Mr. Allcock was a Sunday school teacher but eventually became a Freethinker.

Mr. T. M. Mosley conducted a secular funeral ceremony at Mansfield Crematorium on December 15th.

Provincial Dialogue With Two

Young Artists

"Good God, what's that old-time squiggle?"

"God."

"What d'yer mean? The boys were painting those kinky circles when the Beatles were in their rockabyes."

"Why shouldn't it be god? I mean if there's a god, that's it."

"Wouldn't a square be better than a circle, more apt like?"

"Man, arbitrariness is the nub. That's why there's more to this than meets your short-changed eye. See, if there's a kid called god, he could appear in any way he wanted."

"With all that choice, he'd choose to crawl out from under his stone as your circle? Fellow's mad."

"Wait for it. Ever since the priests started to curse the gooks from a height, our chums have been selling junk to their churches. They had to show god as a man, when the creeps were uneducated like. Now we're climbing up in volume, kid; and it's called the twentieth century. The nut-cases who copulate with atoms want to have their IQs flattered. Even the toadies of the tonsure have been struggling to be 'with it' and getting themselves conned by daubers who tart up the old representational lark and bung in a few distortions so that they can say it's modern life. Time's come to give the straight gimmick."

"Who's going to love your circle, fat-head?"

He didn't want love. He wanted someone to name a bridge after him or a disease. What's love got to do with it in 1965?"

"If you think you can con the vicar into buying your wonky circle, my canary's going to crawl into a serpent's mouth."

"Why not? How emetic can you get? What the hell do you think it is, if it isn't god?"

"God knows..."

O.B.

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CORRESPONDENCE

INDIAN RATIONALIST CONVENTION

The Seventh Convention of Indian Rationalists will be held at Hyderabad on January 23rd and 24th, 1965. The Convention meeting after five years in the midst of many difficulties. Our National leader Mahatma Gandhi mixed up his religion with politics and it is difficult in India today to effect a separation. Our late prime minister Pandit Nehru tried his best to establish a secular state, but he hardly succeeded. The advent of the Dalai Lama into India and the visit of the Pope to our country have confounded the issue. There is great need in India, as probably in the rest of the world, to effect a separation between religion and politics, between church and state. Pakistan and other Islamic countries on our borders are theocratic. Burma and Ceylon have become states with Buddhism as state religion. Surrounded as we are by theocratic states it is difficult for us in India to function as a secular state, but nevertheless that is our only salvation if we are not to further dismember the country as we had to do in the case of Pakistan.

Apart from the issue of secularism, the wider issues of rationalism and civil liberties are still hanging fire. Our Convention therefore has to give a proper lead to the country in this situation.

S. RAMANATHAN,

Secretary, Indian Rationalist Association.

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EARLY last century, the English statesman, George Canning, went on record with the by now historic observation that he had "called the new world into being in order to redress the balance of the old". That is, in pursuance of England's then persistent, if at times tortuous foreign policy of the balance of power, he had backed the USA—far from the political colossus it is today—when in pursuance of the doctrine then recently (1823) enunciated by President Monroe, that country had announced its determination to resist, if necessary by armed force, the intention of Spain (backed by the reactionary Holy Alliance of Russia, Austria and Prussia) to reconquer Latin America which had just been emancipated by Simon Bolivar from Spanish colonial rule.

The "George Cannings" of the Vatican

It is surely clear that this *bon mot* of the English Tory statesman (who incidentally was largely responsible for securing Catholic emancipation in England in the 1820s) is being carefully studied by Pope Paul and his advisers at the Vatican. The back room boys at Rome who planned Pope Paul's recent trip to India, clearly know their Canning. For the Vatican is today evolving a formidable world strategy, less publicised but perhaps even more significant than present much-talked-about plans for Christian unity which, it is no doubt hoped, will compensate for the heavy losses that the Vatican has sustained through the advent of Communism in the East and the growth of a scientifically-conditioned scepticism in the West.

It is said that Alexander once wept because he had no more worlds left to conquer. The Vatican is more fortunate in this respect, for the recently emerged nations of Asia and Africa offer tremendous opportunities for Roman penetration and spectacular aggrandisement in extra-European "realms that Caesar never knew".

Julius Caesar was struck down by his assassins when on the point of setting out to the east on a grandiose plan of world conquest (44BC). Pope Paul, more prosaically but more fortunately, travels peacefully east by air, and safely returns. But, whilst their technical means of locomotion differ, there can be no room for doubt that the modern Roman empire of the popes, like the ancient Roman empire of the Caesars, aims ultimately at one thing and one thing alone—world power. The fact that the Caesars aimed at secular domination, whereas the Papacy ostensibly aims at spiritual ascendancy, signifies merely a verbal difference: both in the last analysis mean the same thing: world power.

Ignatius Loyola and World Catholicism

The term "Catholic" signifies "universal", but it was only from the 16th century that the geographical expansion of European maritime activity reached world-wide proportions in the epoch of Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Magellan and Drake. It was accordingly only in the 16th century that the Church became really universal. The real founder of world Catholicism was St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder (and first general) of the Society of Jesus. Loyola's own

family played a leading part in the conquest of Peru and his nephew, Captain Garcia of Loyola, arrested the last Inca.

For throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, the Jesuits conducted an offensive throughout Asia and America, in the course of which they successively acquired positions of influence at the courts of China, Japan and India, established a secular state in South America (the modern Paraguay) and established a dominant position in Canada.

However, despite this spectacular start, the grandiose Jesuit attempts to conquer the East for Rome, despite some brilliant temporary successes, was ultimately unsuccessful. They

have an apparently well-earned reputation for not being able to work with anyone else, and in China in particular, where at one time the holy fathers were firmly established at the court of the early Manchu emperors in Peking (where their European science was much admired by the Chinese mandarins) the orders given by the "black" pope eventually clashed too obviously with those given by the Vatican and even with Catholic doctrine. For example, the Jesuits allowed their converts to practise ancestor worship, on the pretext that it was a civil rite; and they translated the works of Confucius, whose name they Latinised. Persecution wiped out their missions in Japan, and the Spanish secular power eventually (1767) annexed their "republic" in Paraguay. For a short period (1774-1814), the too-powerful order was actually suppressed by Rome, and they owed their restoration to the French Revolution. For, in order to combat its ravages, Rome had to send for its Jesuit praetorian guard again.

However, whilst the Jesuit world strategy proved to be eventually a failure, it did at least make the Vatican world conscious. For today, Pope Paul is evidently in process of launching a new drive for world power outside the confines of Europe. It was, no doubt, with this aim in view that the present occupant of the Vatican chose to adopt the name of the traditional apostle to the Gentiles.

Rome and Race

Actually it is in its changed attitude towards racial problems in recent years that the political shrewdness of the Vatican has been most of all in evidence. For after all, however much the Vatican may have collaborated with racist regimes at certain critical periods in its chequered evolution (its pro-Fascist activities for example) it does not really require any very profound knowledge of the origins and evolution of Catholicism to realise that it is essentially an organisation of a cosmopolitan character which draws its adherents from many and diverse races and cultures. The world-wide Church of Rome simply could not function as a purely national or racial cult.

In recent years this cosmopolitan principle has been strikingly illustrated in the creation of Asiatic and African cardinals, bishops, etc., whilst a still more recent manifestation is afforded by the Pope's visit to India, no doubt the first of many such experiments in papal globe-trotting by

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Rome Moves East

By F. A. RIDLEY

the former "prisoner of the Vatican". And it does not require any great stretch of imagination to foresee the possibility of non-European popes in the future. But all these above incidental details must not be taken in isolation. They form part of a new drive for world power; and it is this overall strategy that is the really important thing. For the present generation in world history is

witnessing the end of the era of European world domination.

The Vatican is keenly conscious of present trends in world history. Hence Pope Paul's visit to Bombay no doubt to be followed in due course by papal visits to other emerging centres of world power. Hence the present Roman invasion of Asia and Africa.

The Death Wish

By DENIS COBELL

UNTIL 1961 it was still a criminal offence to commit, or attempt to commit, suicide in Britain. No one but the inhumane could tolerate this situation. Schopenhauer, although he believed in the continuous existence of a metaphysical phenomenon, condemned the attitude of the legal and ecclesiastical authorities in England who perpetuated this system, and asked "what penalty can frighten a man who is not afraid of death itself?" Freethinkers have been in the forefront supporting this law reform, and they look forward to the implementation of another closely related to it: the right of the individual to end his own life in certain circumstances through voluntary euthanasia. In a book entitled *Suicide and Attempted Suicide* (Penguin Books, 3s. 6d.), published recently, Professor Erwin Stengel overhauls the position of the suicide, and finds it much improved since 1961. Thankfully, he does not speak of the ultimate effect a successful suicide suffers, nor on the side effects of an attempted suicide, from a moral standpoint. His book is an admirable review of the statistics, techniques and motivations related to suicide.

Professor Stengel states, "Man has only a limited control over his drives, and they include his self-preserving tendencies." This amplifies Schopenhauer's remarks, written over a century ago in *The World as Will and Idea*, that "the suicide wills life, and is only dissatisfied with the conditions under which it has presented itself to him." Professor Stengel points out that loneliness is probably the greatest single factor causing people to kill themselves. Frustrated love affairs do not play such a great part as many people like to think.

The isolation of loneliness can take on many forms: depression and feelings of worthlessness are common amongst the pre-suicidal states. Unfortunately most of those who do kill themselves have not previously received psychiatric treatment of any kind, although their condition, brought to light posthumously by relatives or friends, frequently indicates that they would have received such treatment if they had consulted a doctor. How many tragedies happen year by year simply because relatives and friends shut their eyes to the real danger!

Statistics reveal that suicide is less common during war-time. This is probably because people are wrapped together in a community which does not exist in peacetime, and provides a ready outlet for aggression.

One of the early surveys of suicide was made by Emil Durkheim at the end of the last century. In company with Freud, although his path of thought differed widely, he recognised a humane principle: the suicide's action is usually something entirely beyond his own control. Indeed, few suicides leave notes about their intentions or reasons. Durkheim regarded suicide as a symptom of social disease and recorded three motivations: 1. loneliness and loss of contact with fellow human beings, although resulting from a variety of causes. 2. suicide of the aged or sick who felt they had outlived their usefulness. And 3. malaise of modern society (then!) through relaxation of established

ethical and religious codes. In certain countries, dominated by the aura of Roman Catholicism or Islam, the statistics show a lower suicide rate than in Protestant countries. This is not, though, an altogether reliable guide, as the cause of death may be a verdict other than suicide if at all possible, owing to the disgrace a family may suffer if the truth is revealed. Roman Catholics do not ultimately believe in the complete loss of all suicides—they view their hopes of paradise as slight, however. Protestants have been more hopeless with their regard for the future salvation of suicides, as they reject the doctrine of purgatory.

Like many long awaited law reforms, the removal of suicide from the list of criminal offences was bedevilled by religious, and savage, prejudices lingering from the past. The English custom of driving a stake through the corpse of a suicide originally commenced as a sort of "peace offering" to the evil spirit whom it was presumed had brought about the disaster. On the other hand, there were supporters of primitive religions who lauded suicide. The natives of one Naga tribe thought suicide good because they believed the body would be preserved in its present form throughout eternity. The need to preserve the tribe, doubtless justified the condemnation of suicide. Christians in the Polynesian isle of Tikopia seek to protect their numbers by instilling fear; they believe that the soul of a suicide goes to Satan instead of Paradise.

From a purely philosophical standpoint the Humanist must accept the right of any individual to end his life whenever he wishes. Past mentors who have contributed to this *Weltanschauung* agree. Hume and Voltaire both respect this right. Strangely, Kant thought that suicide was an insult to humanity in general as exemplified and embodied in oneself; however, he could not justify this decision on the basis of principles outlined in his philosophy!

The Church has always adopted a harsher attitude to suicide than homicide. In this it has reflected the sentiments of man, throughout the ages, rather than those of a beneficent supernatural being. There is no specific prohibition of suicide in the Old or New Testament; but certain authorities have found ample support in the Sixth Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill". St. Augustine agreed with this argument, and pronounced that suicide was always a sin because it put the individual beyond the possibility of repentance. The recorded suicide of Judas Iscariot is offered admonitorily; is this what the Christian religion expects from those who deny it? Precocious little children who have been taught a few of scripture's fairy tales often ask their parents why they do not kill themselves, if heaven is such a marvellous place.

Most other religions also condemn suicide, except when performed as isolated acts of martyrdom. Hinduism and Buddhism reject suicide on the grounds that it is man's duty to live life according to the allotted span. Buddhists believe the sufferings and miseries of this life are the result

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The Crucifixion, a Libellous Accusation Against the Jews

By SOLOMON ZEITLIN

FOR over eighteen centuries the Jews have been accused of the crucifixion of Jesus. To this day they are still called occasionally Christ killers, deicides. This accusation was propagated from the beginning of the second century and has continued to our own day. The first one to blame the Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus was the Church Father Justin Martyr ¹. The Gospels as well as the Apostolic Fathers did not place the onus of the crucifixion upon the Jews. This accusation was brought forward to show that the Jews, who originally were the chosen people of God, after they crucified Jesus were no longer the chosen people—God had forsaken them. The Christians then became the chosen people, the true Israelites ². The destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple were regarded as a punishment for their guilt of the death of Jesus. This accusation was brought forward first—to show the truth of Christianity, second—to show that Judaism is no longer the true religion. Some of the early Christians in their writings charged the Jews with this onus. Chrysostom particularly brought violent charges against the Jews. He considered the synagogues dens of idolatry and the abode of devils even though there were no images in them.³ He further wrote that they did not worship God but worshipped devils ⁴. These homilies and writings in due time poisoned the minds of Christians who came to look upon the Jews not as the children of God but children of the devils, responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, for which there could be no repentance unless they accepted Jesus.

Historically the Jews were not responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus was crucified as king of the Judaeans, as a rebel against Rome. The Judaeans at that time were a vanquished people. They were under the yoke of Rome. The high priest was the ecclesiastical leader in the Temple. He was an appointee of the Romans charged with the civil management of the people ⁵. He was responsible to the Roman authorities for the tranquility of Judaea. However in religious matters Judaea had complete autonomy ⁶. The *Bet Din* had authority to punish any religious offender ⁷ but in civil and political matters the Judaeans had no right to inflict punishment. The procurator had the sole right to inflict punishment in civil and political matters. When Judaea became a province of Rome a procurator was appointed over the country. Augustus Caesar invested him with the power to inflict capital punishment on any Judaeans who was guilty of subversive activities against Rome ⁸. The high priest was also the civil supervisor over the people and had the responsibility of informing the Roman authorities about any person who was subversive against Rome. The high priest from time to time summoned a council, *synedrion*, to investigate a case and presented it to the procurator ⁹. (The term *synedrion* must not be confused with *sanhedrin*. The former term has the connotation of a civil council. The latter term has the connotation of a religious court, which came into vogue after the destruction of the Temple. During the Second Commonwealth it was called *Bet Din*.)¹⁰ A high priest who did not serve the interests of Rome was summarily dismissed and regarded as disloyal. Some of the high priests, in order to retain their position, disregarded the interests of the Judaeans to show their obedience to Rome. We consider them to be quislings. John states that Caiaphas, who was high priest at the time of the crucifixion, said to the Judaeans, "that it was expedient that one man should die for the people"¹¹

Caiaphas was apprehensive that if it was not reported to Pilate about Jesus the entire people would be accused of being in accord with those who regarded Jesus as king of the Judaeans. When Pilate asked Jesus, "Art thou the king of the Judaeans?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest it."¹² When Pilate asked the people whom to release he said, "Will ye that I release unto you the king of the Judaeans?" The chief priests protested, "We have no king but Caesar."¹³ The fact that the high priest had to assert again and again, "We have no king but Caesar" indicates that the trial of Jesus was a political issue and the high priests were fearful of being accused as accomplices in declaring Jesus a king of the Judaeans.

Some modern historians do recognise that a distinction must be made between the theology in connection with the crucifixion of Jesus and the historical facts. It was theologically important for the leaders of the early Church to place the onus of the crucifixion upon the Jews. It was a new religion and they had to struggle to support it and to win new recruits.

James Daane, Associate Editor of *Christianity Today*, in an article, "The Anatomy of Anti-Semitism", in the issue of March 13th, 1964, wrote, "There is an answer to anti-Semitism, and although it is neither simple nor easy, the Church owes it to herself even more than to the Jews to make the answer clear." What is the answer? The author continues, "While the Church cannot expect Jews to accept the theological interpretation given to the history of Christ's death in Scripture, it can expect the Jews to acknowledge the actual historical facts. A Jewish denial of history is, as any denial of history, in the long run futile. There is no justification for a denial of the recorded history of Christ's death, for the authenticity of the records is not doubted by responsible scholarship." To prove that the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus he quotes Matthew 27. 1 and says, "No rewriting of history by script writers of modern movies, placing the responsibility upon the Romans, will effectively conceal these historical facts." According to Daane, the Jewish religious leaders—so he designates the Pharisees, scribes, priests—were responsible for the death of Jesus.

When a historian deals with old documents he ought to scrutinise them with great care. If there are many documents dealing with the same historical events he should compare them and should carefully examine every document. After he has brought all the documents together he should search for the underlying reason which brought about the facts.

There are four Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the synoptic Gospels. They are more or less in agreement in their accounts of the ministry of Jesus. The Gospel according to John is called unsynoptic, since it differs from the other Gospels and there are discrepancies. Though Matthew, Mark and Luke are generally in agreement, nevertheless different versions are recorded regarding events in connection with the arrest and trial of Jesus. An impartial historian in presenting the facts of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus must take cognisance of the differences in the accounts given of these historical facts. It is also his duty to carefully examine all the available manuscripts of the Gospels.

Daane, who places the responsibility of the crucifixion of Jesus upon the Jews, as an actual historical fact and

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This Believing World

As a special treat to all viewers, ITV gave us on Christmas Eve last the Archbishop of Canterbury answering questions put by some Sussex University students on the birth of Jesus, and its relevance for the world today. It was a feeble show. The Archbishop had not the slightest doubt that every thing in the way of miracles and angels took place exactly as described in Matthew and Luke. He especially emphasised the incarnation which, he said, proved that God Almighty took on the form of a man "humbly" to save the world. Although other religions, the Archbishop conceded, had their good points, no other religion could show us an incarnation.

But while Dr. Ramsey was firmly standing all square on miracles and the incarnation, the Rev. J. Lowe, vicar of St. Erkenwald's, Southend, was telling his congregation that "Christ's miracles are myths" (*Sunday Express*, December 20th). They are, he said "only figurative examples to illustrate deeper truths". And—horror of horrors!—he added that Christ had no more power to perform miracles than he had himself. Mr. Lowe did not believe in the virgin birth, and even gave up the beautiful miracle of turning water into wine for people who were "well drunk" at a wedding feast. Even the resurrection was too much for Mr. Lowe to swallow.

What the vicar would like to see is a booklet explaining away all miracles. Well this has been done a hundred times by Freethinkers. What about Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*?—though we admit it explains away all Christianity as well. It has never been really answered, and we often wonder why such a stout believer in everything in the Bible like Dr. Ramsey has never tackled it. Even Dr. Ramsey's good friend and much stouter believer, Dr. Heenan shirks replying to Paine's masterpiece.

Considering that the Bible is the world's best seller (even if very few people really read it) the account given by Julian Holland in the *Daily Mail* (December 21st) of his efforts to buy a Bible for his children is, for such a holy subject, highly amusing. It appears that there are many "different texts" though most shops take it for granted that you want the Authorised Version. But poor Mr. Holland found such a "bewildering plethora of sizes, bindings, paper, type faces, illustrations, and prices," that it took him a week to make his selection. We remember that in our young days there were many Christian societies only too pleased to give you a Bible free; but Mr. Holland found Bibles cost anything from 6s. 6d. to £65. Probably, secondhand ones could be bought for twopence.

A reader of the *"Daily Mail"* (December 24th) is puzzled why Christmas is not celebrated as much in Scotland as it is in England. The reason appears to have nothing to do with "our Lord", but with John Knox, who was against "all forms of worship" followed by the Roman Catholic Church. But, thank God, the Scots are more and more inclined to keep Christmas Day in spite of Knox and the Catholic Church. We wonder what some of them will say when cribs in full imitation of Catholic ones will appear in the holy kirks? Won't they take the bonnie wee Babe of Bethlehem to their hearts? Or will they, like the Rev. Mr. Lowe of Southend, insist that the "miracle never took place?"

"The Catholic Herald" issued a "Travel Number" on January 1st. Readers were given, free with every copy, a "specially drawn and printed" three-colour map of the

Catholic Shrines of Europe. In addition, special copies of the map printed in four colours on art paper and "designed for framing will be available for sale. These are, we were told, "particularly suitable for schools, convents, religious houses and the Catholic home."

No story for "Psychic News" in the announcement by the President of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund on December 5th. Speaking at Bury St. Edmunds, Sir Cecil Wakeley said: "We cure 30,000 people of cancer every year, and you never hear of it" (*The Birmingham Post*, December 7th, 1964). But one alleged cure by a faith healer and the "psychic" press is full of it.

Among the "Observer's" sayings of the year was this from Reginald Paget MP. "I know of no book which has been a source of brutality and sadistic conduct both public and private, that can compare with the Bible." Mr. Grigg please note.

THE DEATH WISH

(Concluded from page 10)

of misdeeds in a former life. Islam claims a similar view, as stated in the Koran: "It is not for my soul to die, save by God's permission written down for an appointed time".

"Although it is true that suicides are in general less common among the devout than among the non-religious, it would be unwise to rely on this rule in the assessment of the suicidal risk in depressive illness". So writes Professor Stengel. He therefore recognises that religion, in itself, has very little to do with depression. However the social activities of churches may prevent the creation of melancholia through loneliness. Humanists are just awakening to the importance of this, and the British Humanist Association has proposals for the setting up of a Humanist Club Centre, which could fill the breach for agnostics who need a community life with kindred beings. The problems of isolation and loneliness will remain, and increase, in an age of shorter working hours and accompanying prolonged leisure periods. Professor Stengel concludes with a straightforward plea for the need to build up our social-services if we are to overcome this dilemma.

The "Suicide Samaritans", whose advertisements stare down at us in the tube, have done excellent work. They commenced in a London city church, but the idea has since become widespread throughout the country. The opportunity to telephone a particular number at any hour of the day or night has undoubtedly been of great value to many who look upon the world surrounding them as too big a problem to handle alone. It is gratifying to note that, according to Professor Stengel, the "Samaritans" do not force the issue of religious belief too heavily. In Los Angeles there is a Suicide Prevention Centre, which has no religious backing, but is operated with the aid of a Federal Government grant. This seems a much safer plan.

The friendly assistance gained immediately by someone who recovers from a suicide attempt may lead others to suspect that it was sheer exhibitionism, and the person concerned did not intend it to succeed. The "appeal effect" of attempted suicide, though it is not always a conscious motive, may result in the attentiveness of relatives who have, anyway, been lacking in their familial duties. We must all know someone who has tried to kill him or herself, it is incumbent upon us not only to befriend such folk, but to realise their situation and advise accordingly.

We can be thankful that the suicide rate per 100,000 of population has not reached its pre-war proportions in Britain, despite the fact that many commentators consider life more menacing now than then!

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

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Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street.) Sunday Evenings

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays. 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square). every Friday. 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, January 10th, 6.45 p.m.: "Brains Trust."

Glasgow Secular Society (Central Halls, 25 Bath Street), Sunday, January 10th, 3 p.m.: OLIVER BROWN, "Religion and Morals."

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, January 10th, 6.30 p.m.: J. M. ALEXANDER, "From Magic to Science."

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1.), Sunday, January 10th, 7.30 p.m.: G. N. DEV, "Nehru".

Notes and News

ON December 18th, 1964, we printed "The Dates of the Birth and the Crucifixion of Jesus" by the Jewish scholar, Solomon Zeitlin, Horace Stern Professor of Rabbinic Law and Lore at the Dropsie College, Philadelphia. This week we are printing the first part of Professor Zeitlin's study of "The Crucifixion, a Libellous Accusation Against the Jews." Once again we should like to thank the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for permission to publish this article, and Rabbi Dr. Joseph Litvin, who obtained this permission for us.

★

TRUE or false, wrote John Grigg amazingly in the *Guardian* on Christmas Eve, "Christianity has been the most fruitful and beneficent influence in the story of mankind." Anti-Christians of the "rationalist or humanist school" might portray Christianity as a religion of prohibition and restriction and "there is much, alas" in the Christian record—Mr. Grigg admitted—"which lends colour to their [the Humanists'] accusation." But to judge Christianity by "the use which tyrants and bigots have made of it is as superficial as to judge natural science by the abuses which have been perpetrated in its name. The gospel of Christ is essentially a gospel of emancipation." It is, we repeat, amazing, to find Mr. Grigg writing like this. Is the threat of eternal torment—taught by Jesus—"a gospel of emancipation?" Has it had a "fruitful and beneficent influence" in the story of mankind? We invite Mr. Grigg to answer.

THOSE who say that Christianity has done more harm than good were, Mr. Grigg believed, "the unconscious victims of Gibbonian propaganda and sheer historical ignorance." In fact, Mr. Grigg carefully selected—and weighted—his own historical examples. It was a Christian, he said, who led the movement to abolish slavery "within the British Empire." That non-Christians like Thomas Paine had earlier condemned slavery, and that revolutionary France had earlier abolished it, are not mentioned. To state—as Mr. Grigg did—that "Gibbon's England gave countenance to the institution of slavery" is a deplorable effort to shift the responsibility for it off the shoulders of the Christian traders on to those of Christianity's critic. But Mr. Grigg's most lamentable historical example concerned the Renaissance which he claimed as "above all the Church's achievement." It "also released strong currents of anticlerical feeling", of course, but that merely illustrated that "Christianity is for ever providing the antidote and corrective to its own abuses." Mr. Grigg, it will be seen, intends to have it both ways.

★

CHASTITY is "certainly harder than contraception, but rather more worth while," according to Trevor Huddleston, Bishop of Masasi (*The Observer*, 27/12/64). A fair retort to such a remark is, we suggest, to ask if both have been tried. But in this case it might be considered improper. We cannot refrain, however, from indicating the misleading nature of some of the Bishop's language. "Christian chastity is not," he said, "a prohibition but an affirmation—the affirmation that soul and body are so closely inter-related . . .". Even granting the affirmation (which we don't), the moral prohibition remains.

★

UNLIKE our colleague, the writer of This Believing World, we didn't see the Archbishop of Canterbury on TV on Christmas Eve, but can well appreciate Maurice Richardson's comments in the *Observer* (27/12/64). Mr. Richardson had hoped for a spirited theological debate but Dr. Ramsey refused to be drawn. "He radiated his usual benignity . . . but took almost no notice of the younger generation's objections whether atheistic, agnostic or heretical. Bless 'em all was his message." And, Mr. Richardson added, "You could hardly blame him."

★

WE did see the US comedian Woody Allen on the Eamonn Andrews Show (ITV, 27/12/64), and we liked his remarks on the American telephone company's "Dial a prayer." If you're an atheist you don't hear anything, Mr. Allen said. And if you're an agnostic you're not sure whether you heard anything or not. On the same programme, Spike Milligan was a hilariously irreverent Catholic.

★

THE following "Prayer for a Teenage Daughter" by Marie Hayden Michaud, is taken from the Maltese Roman Catholic monthly, *The Faith* (December, 1964) and is, we think, instructive—though not perhaps in the way Mrs. Michaud intended.

"Blessed Mother, Seat of Wisdom, please grant me the grace to guide my daughter during these difficult years. You know her eagerness for life and love; her high spirits and her fear of being left out of social activities. Help me to guard her against loss of innocence; help me to suffer her resentment rather than expose her to occasions of sin. Give me the fortitude to inflict a little pain now rather than to risk her suffering a great deal in later years. Help me, please Mother, to deal with her with Christ-like patience."

asserts that the Jews should acknowledge "actual historical facts" did not deal with the subject as a responsible historian but as a medieval Christian theologian.

Daane states, "According to the New Testament records it was the Jews who desired, plotted and promoted the execution of Jesus." He quotes Matthew 27. 1. In Matthew we read, "When the morning was come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death." In Mark 15. 1 we read, "And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council and bound Jesus and carried him away and delivered him to Pilate." The words, "to put him to death" are not given in Mark. Luke, after giving the account of the arrest of Jesus and when he was brought to the house of the high priest, states, "And the whole multitude of them arose and led him unto Pilate." (23. 1). John, after mentioning the arrest of Jesus, states, "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgement: and it was early: and they themselves went not into the judgement hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover." (18. 28).

From the above quotations we note the differences in the accounts given of the surrender of Jesus to Pilate. All state that it occurred in the morning. The difference between the synoptic and the unsynoptic Gospels is that, according to the former the surrender of Jesus took place in the morning of the first day of Passover, while according to John it took place in the morning of the eve of Passover, the fourteenth day of Nisan. John does not state that the Pharisees and the elders plotted to kill Jesus. He said that when Jesus was arrested Caiaphas gave counsel to the Jews, "It was expedient that one man should die for the people." (18. 14).

Matthew referring about the arrest of Jesus, states, "Then assembled together the chief priests and the elders of the people into the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill him." (26. 3-4). The words "to kill him" are not found in some manuscripts¹⁴.

Mark has, "The chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by subtilty and put him to death."¹⁵ The words "by subtilty" are not found in all the manuscripts¹⁶. We read in Mark 3. 6, "And the Pharisees went forth, straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him." The text has "to destroy", however in one manuscript we read "to deliver".

Luke records, "And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people."¹⁷

In the Gospel according to John there is no mention of the Pharisees and the scribes plotting to kill Jesus.

(To be continued)

1. *Dialogue with Trypho*, 108; Tertullian, *Apology*, 26: Origen, *Against Celsus*, 2. 8; 4. 22.
2. Cf. Justin Martyr, *Ibid.* 135; The Epistle of Barnabas, 13.
3. *C. Judaeos* 1, 4; 6.
4. *Ibid.* 1. 3.
5. S. Zeitlin, "The Crucifixion of Jesus Re-Examined" *JQR* 1941, pp. 344-346.
6. Josephus tells that Titus said to the Jews when he appealed to them surrender "And did we not permit you to put to death any who passed it (beyond the barrier to the sanctuary) even were he a Roman?", *Wars*, 6. 2. 4 (126). Thus it is apparent that the Jews had the right to inflict capital punishment on their offenders. It is quite clear from Titus's speech that even a Roman who transgressed the Judaeans law by entering the sanctuary was to be punished by the Judaeans.
7. Cf. S. Zeitlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-344. S. Hoenig, *The Great Sanhedrin*, 1953.
8. *Wars*, 2. 8. 1 (117).
9. S. Zeitlin, *Who Crucified Jesus?* Ch. 5.

10. *Idem*, "Synedron in the Judeo-Hellenistic Literature and Sanhedrin in the Tannaitic Literature", *JQR*, 1946, pp. 307-315.
11. John 11. 50. Cf. also 11. 48, "If we let him thus alone all (men) will believe in him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and the nation (state)".
12. John 18. 37.
13. *Ibid.* 19. 15.
14. Cf. Von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, II. *Text mit Apparat*.
15. 14.1.
16. Cf. Von Soden, *ad loc.*
17. 22. 2.

Ceylon Rationalist Challenges Astrologers

ABRAHAM T. KOVOOR, President of the Ceylon Rationalist Association, has issued a thousand rupee challenge to astrologers, in a letter to the *Times of Ceylon*, December 19th, 1964. Mr. Kovoor says he is prepared to pay this amount to each astrologer who can correctly forecast certain events connected with the lives of 10 persons. The challenge will be in force even after his death as he proposes to make a request in his last will to his son, Aries Kovoor of the Sorbonne, to keep it open during his own lifetime or as long as his finances permit.

The text of Mr. Kovoor's letter is as follows:—

"It is reported that the unprecedented delay of 14 days in dissolving Parliament after the Government [of Ceylon] was defeated on December 3rd was purely on the advice of astrologers. If this report is true, it has to be accepted that we in this country are still living in a deplorably primitive state of mental and cultural development where the affairs of the state are decided by consulting oracles.

"I am neither a politician, nor do I belong to any political party.

"I am prepared to pay Rs. 1,000 to each astrologer who can give correctly the sex and the dates of death (if dead) of 10 persons whose dates and times of birth correct to the minute together with the latitudes and longitudes of the places of their births will be supplied.

"A duplicate copy of the questionnaire with the correct answers will be placed in an envelope and sealed and kept in the safe custody of one or more mutually agreed judges who will be given all facilities to check up the accuracy of the data I supply.

"In order to prevent the general public from competing in this big gamble a nominal deposit of Rs. 50 will have to be paid by each astrologer who wishes to take up the challenge. This amount will be refunded to the winners together with Rs. 1,000 each.

"Palmists also are invited to take up this challenge under the same conditions. Instead of the dates of birth, they will be supplied with duplicate copies of palm-prints of 10 persons dead or alive.

"There is a set of people in this country who argue that the good name of this marvellous 'science'—astrology—is spoiled by numerous quacks in the field. They say that if genuine astrologers are given correct data, their predictions will never go wrong.

"To them I wish to say that it is the duty of such 'genuine' astrologers to come forward to take up this challenge in public, and save the 'good' name of this so called science.

"In spite of the fact that copies of a previous challenge of mine of a similar nature were sent to the famous—or should I say notorious?—astrologers of India, not one of them had the courage or enough faith in their own profession to take up that challenge. Here in Ceylon one person from Kegalla threatened to accept it, but wanted two

months' time to prepare for the test. Even after eight months and numerous reminders, there was no response from him either.

"I state boldly that not a single astrologer or palmist will ever come forward to face this test in public, although he will still continue to practise his fraud on gullible fools.

"However, to convince the gullibles all over the world I am keeping this challenge open till my death. In my last will I propose requesting my son Aries Kovoov of the Sorbonne University, Paris, to keep up this challenge on my behalf till his death or as long as his finances permit. If he is kind enough to fulfil this last wish of his father, he will be doing a great service to millions of his fellow beings including the parliamentarians, Cabinet Ministers and Prime Ministers of this country by keeping them away from astrologers, palmists and other oracles."

Reflections

By KIT MOUAT

I AM not sure if my last article was as unrelated to its title as Miss Hawtin claims. Perhaps I shall be safe this time.

Sometimes I think that the only thing one is likely to get out of the Humanist movement (s) (and, for that matter to put in) is a split personality. I have been accused of "corrupting" the village in which I live. When a woman I had not met (and never even heard of) changed her mind about being confirmed, I was blamed; and I waited anxiously for someone's chickens to die! In the local press I am referred to as the "Unrepentant Atheist", and for a few days after every letter of mine contradicting the clergy or attacking ecclesiastical iniquities, the smiles are frozen on my neighbours' faces. After quoting some of *An Atheist's Values* by Richard Robinson (splendid book) at a local school, I was accused of turning even the pro-Humanists back to the Church! So much so, in fact, that my husband has asked me what other qualifications are needed for an award of "Hero of the Ethical Union". But others consider me too moderate; too tolerant.

Are we fighting the Churches, Christianity, religion in general, or are we attacking totalitarianism, bigotry, privilege, apathy and injustice wherever we find it, in Christians and Christianity, in Humanists and our own organisations? It is no good praising democracy if we do not practise it. And those who have no taste for martyrdom should, I think, be ready to fight any injustice they feel to be levelled at themselves. It is the Christians who have put forward the idea that self-defence is not respectable, thereby encouraging quite a number of minor dictators.

I have, I admit, a prejudice against words like "purity" (of this or that race, blood, philosophy or sex), and "purges" are painfully linked in my mind with "pogroms", but then I was growing up in the thirties. But am I really alone in fearing that those who use such words (when claiming to be rational) may be accused, without further evidence, of extremism and irresponsibility? Perhaps I am.

As for this fifth column skulking in our midst, I remain baffled. What is the suggestion, exactly: that Christians have joined the Humanist movement in order to attack the roots of secularism and sabotage our efforts, without the majority of genuine Humanists and Atheists noticing? If so, I just cannot understand why the accusers cannot name the accused. I still remain unconvinced that there is *libel* involved in accusing a professed Humanist of being a Christian (not a Hottentot or a Communist) even if he would consider it to be an insult. My sense of melodrama is, I confess, rather weak. I am afraid that this must all seem no end of a joke to any outsiders who pick up our literature.

May I for my own part say that although (like everyone else) I can think of Atheists, Secularists, Humanists, etc., who I consider do more harm than good to the movement, it has never occurred to me that the harm is intended.

May I now return Miss Hawtin's compliment. I enjoy her articles too. But dare I question a statistic? I know the CEC quotes an average of 14,000 converts to the Roman Catholic faith per year, but I believe there was a considerable drop in 1963. And this is only converts, of course; no mention of lapses or those Catholics who are on our own lists, as atheists. I am not trying to minimise the danger of the Vatican. I, too, deplore Roman Catholic brainwashing, spirit-rotting, life-denying and their educational mockery, but let's get our facts straight if and when possible.

As for the Humanist "activities" on my list. I would not say that they are exactly being "indulged" in. They demand a great deal of voluntary hard work on the part of those involved. They are positive projects aimed at increasing human happiness, and not even those who are doing as much in different directions with this aim, need scoff. I am sure Bradlaugh, Place and Paine would support them all. All right, superstition must be "extirpated", but if we want human beings to put aside their gods and saints, snake-skins and rosaries, we ourselves have surely to provide the comfort they are looking for. Our secularism takes different forms, according to our personalities, talents, responsibilities and situation; and a very good thing too.

[With this article we must close the discussion on the alleged fifth column inside the Humanist movement. Whether Mrs. Mouat is right in saying that it must all seem a joke to outsiders, we don't know. We believe, however, that it has had sufficient public airing in our columns—ED.]

As Good Cooks Go

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

THE priest had been delighted to meet the friend whom he had not seen for many, many years. They had celebrated with a delicious dinner which had been skilfully orchestrated around a presentation of veal with white truffles. The guest could not refrain from complimenting the priest on the excellence of his cook. The priest sighed with content. "Oh yes," he said, "now that I am older and wiser I must admit I know how to choose a housekeeper. It may be painful to look at Maggie, but she gives me such excellent silent service; and the poor old thing is a real artist in the kitchen. When I was younger and more foolish I chose a housekeeper because the girl looked so bonny. There was no sin in that, even if it was indiscreet; but one is only old once, and one cannot expect a young man to have wisdom. Even so, it was not long before I realised I had made a mistake with Annie in spite of her good cooking. The girl was irresponsible and she would burst into my sitting room with the bare excuse of any trivial question. My afternoon nap became a farce. Yet I hesitated to dismiss the girl. I knew that my parishioners liked to imagine that a priest has infinite patience and gladly welcomes any trial as a penance. I was also afraid that such a high-spirited girl might have revenge and spread malicious lies if I turned her out for no stronger reason than that she was talkative by nature. You see she was an orphan, and would be without a roof over her head if I told her to go. Jobs in those days were hard to find, although it's hard to remember that a domestic servant, whatever her shortcomings, might find herself without employment. So I suggested a compromise, and she cried bitterly but finally accepted the proposition. I told her I would visit

a doctor who had been recommended to me as a professional hypnotist, and that I would ask the doctor to give me a post-hypnotic suggestion. Thanks to hypnotism, I would no longer see or hear my housekeeper. It would be impossible for her to get on my nerves, although she could still minister to my needs until she found a position which would suit her requirements. Yes, I accomplished an unusually meritorious act of charity; and really the business worked out very well. Annie felt bound to do her best for me, as I'd told her I would not give her a reference if she left in sulks. My meals appeared as if by magic, and the house was kept clean and tidy as if by a ghost. I slept well in the afternoons, and at night. Then one day Annie decided to accept the postman's proposal. He was very ugly, but it was the best that Annie could do for herself in our small village with limited opportunities. Unfortunately, the postman was not only ugly but illiterate, and he tried to make trouble when Annie—who always would talk too much—confessed to him one night that she had often shared my bed. I needed all my powers of rhetoric and persuasion to convince the husband that for years I had not been able to see or hear Annie, and that if the silly girl had exploited the situation as far as I was concerned I was guiltless. An invisible sin . . . well, that is surely no sin at all? In the end I was able to make the yokel understand that hypnotism is a scientific reality. However, he still whined that I had the best of two worlds. Naturally, I pointed out to him that he was being grossly unfair. The best? . . . Why, Annie was in no way so brilliantly inspired in the kitchen as my dear old Maggie."

CORRESPONDENCE

LUNATIC CHRIST?

Do any of your readers know of any writings which treat Christ from the point of view of his being a criminal lunatic? The psychoanalysts have strangely neglected him as a subject.

The contradictory nature of his utterances and their contents, as well as their pernicious nature (Christianity has been the cause of more misery than anything else), fully justify their being described as the ravings of a criminal lunatic.

The other two biggest rogues in history, Mahommed and Moses, were people of the same kidney, and then there have been the smaller fry, Joseph Smith, Piggott of the Abode of Love, Sister Amy McPherson and many others, the intellectual "cosherers".

FREDERICK HILTON, PhD.

[Albert Schweitzer published a Psychiatric Study of Jesus in 1913—Ed].

MARXISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL

F. A. Ridley's article "A Marxist view of Christian Origins", is too far-fetched for any thinking person to take seriously.

To say that Christianity and Buddhism would have evolved eventually and essentially in the same way, even if there had been no Christ or Buddha, is like saying the Nazi movement would have evolved the same way independent of Hitler. It is nonsense. Perhaps he will be telling us next that if Shakespeare (or Bacon or Oxford or whoever) had not written the plays someone else would have written them. Mr. Ridley's seems more like a mysterious conception of history rather than a materialist one. Kautsky may have been a great Marxist, but certainly not a great thinker.

Marxism fails to explain the role of the exceptional individuals in history; in fact, the individual as a person, as a moral being is actually annihilated in historical materialism. Yet paradoxical to all this, Mr. Ridley said in one of his articles, on "Calvin, Stalin, and the Idea of Progress" (October 9th) "That without Calvin and Calvinism there seems to be little room for doubt that the Reformation as such, would have failed, and that the Jesuit Counter-Reformation would have reconquered Europe."

Here we get a glimpse of the contradictory philosophy of Mr. Ridley. When it pleases him he raises the individual on high, and when otherwise, the role of the individual is sunk into insignificance. We can hardly call that clear thinking, can we?

R. SMITH

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PROFESSOR Edward Roux, Head of the Department of Botany at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, Chairman of the South African Rationalist Association, and a contributor to THE FREETHINKER, has been banned from entering any educational institution, from teaching and writing, and confined to the Johannesburg area. Last September, the South African Minister of Justice(!), Mr. Vorster, said that Dr. Roux and other alleged "Communists" would be prohibited from teaching at universities from January 1st, 1965. The principals of Cape Town and Witwatersrand universities made representations to the Minister on behalf of the three lecturers involved, but a series of 21 prohibitions were served on Dr. Roux at his home in Melville, Johannesburg, on December 16th, 1964.

The Ban

For the next five years he is forbidden to enter the premises of the University of the Witwatersrand or any other educational institution in South Africa; to teach or instruct anyone except his own children in any subject (Dr. Roux's daughter is married); to enter any location or township reserved for Africans, Coloureds or Asians, or any factory; to attend any gathering—even a purely social one—or any meeting; to publish or prepare for publication in any form anything he writes on any subject; to attend any court of law unless required as a witness; to talk or write to any other banned person. He has also been confined to the Johannesburg magisterial area, and will therefore be unable to visit his farm at Muldersdrift, near the city. The only exception allowed by the Minister is that Dr. Roux may continue to enter the premises of the University of the Witwatersrand until the end of January to attend to the affairs of his department.

Edward R. Roux was born in Pietersburg in the Transvaal 61 years ago, was educated at the Johannesburg university, and came to Cambridge on a scholarship. He was appointed to the Witwatersrand staff in 1946, and became head of the Department of Botany four years ago. When he was due to retire recently, the University authorities asked Dr. Roux to stay on for a further five years. They did this—as the South African *Sunday Times* pointed out in a leader on December 20th, 1964—because "they recognised his ability as a scientist. No less important, they were fully aware of Dr. Roux's political past and were satisfied that it belonged to the past. Dr. Roux, in fact, rejected Communism as far back as 1936; and his work at the University was devoted entirely to the teaching of his subject."

Principal Protests

A senior staff member at Witwatersrand described the ban as "much worse than we expected" (*Rand Daily Mail*, December 17th, 1964). "It not only deprives the University of a professor who has served it devotedly for the past 18 years, but also deprives the country of one of its best scientists". And Professor I. D. MacCrone, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, deplored the banning in a

statement to the South African *Sunday Times*. This reads as follows:—

"As the academic head of the University of the Witwatersrand, I feel that I must express my concern and distress at the brusque action of the Minister of Justice in terminating the appointment of Professor E. R. Roux, a senior member of our academic staff. Among the many reasons for my concern, the following appear to me to be

the most important: To the knowledge of the University Council, of his colleagues and of myself, Professor Roux has since his appointment to the staff of the University in 1946, never been a member of the Communist Party, never attempted to promote the

aims of communism within the University, nor has he engaged in any kind of communist indoctrination of students at the University.

"If any such information is available to the Minister, it has never been disclosed to the University Council. Since the action of the Minister has been taken under the very formidable powers vested in him by the Suppression of Communism Act, one might have expected that such powers could have been used to charge Professor Roux in open court. Instead, he has been compelled to resign his appointment and subjected to punitive restrictions, the reasons for which are known neither to the University nor to himself."

Serious Repercussions

"This action by the Minister will have serious repercussions on the academic staff, who are quite rightly concerned at what appears to be the unnecessarily harsh and arbitrary treatment of one of their own number", Professor MacCrone continued.

"Hitherto, both in theory and in practice, the University Council alone has had the right to dismiss or terminate the appointment of a member of the academic staff, subject to the right of appeal by the member to the Minister of Education, Arts and Science against a decision to dismiss him. This right, both of the University Council and of every member of the staff, has now been invaded.

"Whilst in my own mind I have no fear that similar action will be, or for that matter can be, taken against any other member of the staff, the fact remains that members of staff are disturbed and distressed both at the circumstances under which Professor Roux has been dismissed and the very severe consequences of such dismissal for himself.

"And finally, there are on the academic staff of the University over 500 people in full- or part-time employment. To single out one of them for this kind of treatment is not merely a blow against the autonomy of the University to employ (or dismiss as the case may be) whom it thinks fit. It will also have the effect of still further damaging the academic image of South African universities abroad. Those South African heads of universities who, like myself, have had some first-hand experience of the distortions and misconceptions about our universities that

VIEWS AND OPINIONS
*South African Government
Bans Rationalist Professor*
By COLIN McCALL

prevail even in academic circles in other countries and who have tried so hard to remove them, will now find their task being made even more difficult by this action of the Minister."

Motives

The South African government's motives in issuing the ban are not entirely plain. Dr. Roux himself believes that they are mainly political and directed against the liberal University of the Witwatersrand. Some of his colleagues consider, however, that Dr. Roux is being personally victimised because of his book, *Time Longer Than Rope*, a survey of the non-White political movements in South Africa, first published in 1948, but revised and reissued in Britain and the USA this year. The book is critical of the Verwoerd administration.

Effect on the Rationalist Association

What effect will the bannings have on the South African Rationalist Association? The Association will not fold up, but may have difficulty in continuing its monthly journal, *The Rationalist*, which was edited by the Professor and his wife, and published from their home. Certainly he will no longer be able openly to write for it or to assist in preparing it for press. These blows against the Associa-

tion may, as Dr. Roux suggests, be only incidental. "It is not", he says, "a large or influential body."

True it is not large, but it may be more influential than Dr. Roux modestly allows. The Association had a following in university circles, and its organ had for some time been printed partly in Afrikaans. Disseminating rationalist ideas among the Afrikaaners may well have been regarded as a sin by the South African government, as well as by the powerful fundamentalist Dutch Reformed Church. For the present, however, we can only speculate on this.

Clearly, and sadly, Dr. Roux's academic career in South Africa is ended. The banning orders make it impossible for him to continue his scientific research either in the University laboratories and greenhouses or on his own farm. Many of his colleagues are urging him to leave the country so that he can carry out further research and publish his findings without interference.

Reluctant as he is to leave his native land, Dr. Roux may feel compelled to do so, providing, of course, that he can get a passport. Wherever he decides to go, he can be sure of the best wishes and support of his free-thinking admirers and friends.

Are You Saved?

By F. H. SNOW

When the words "Are You Saved?" appeared on my television screen, on a recent Sunday evening, I was rather startled. Surely *Meeting Point* was not staging an old time, evangelistic appeal to its listeners? The announcer promptly dispelled the notion. The question televised had little significance for most people today, he said, and, after more to the same effect, he proposed to introduce several persons well qualified to explain its meaning.

As one with some experience of the time when "Are you saved?" was a far more familiar interrogation than now, and was therefore perfectly clear as to its significance, I was very interested. I wanted to hear just how these gentlemen of differing denominations would deal with the question. I wanted to hear how far from the meaning which they knew to be the true one, they would go. I wondered if any of them would be honest on the subject.

At the end of *Meeting Point* my wonder was that those Christian spokesmen could have been so hypocritical. Their efforts to explain what we were to be saved from were remarkable examples of evasiveness. We were to be saved from the evils attendant upon a materialistic outlook; from our natural miseries; from the mental punishments which afflict those void of the grace bestowed by the Christian way of life; from sin. Nothing about hell and eternal pain. When I was young, and not so young, the penalties mentioned by the panellists were but a prelude to a hereafter in a fiery pit. By the mercy of God, through the atoning blood of Christ, repentant humanity was saved from everlasting burning. Have the Churches repudiated that doctrine? They have not. Hell is rarely, if ever, mentioned nowadays from a Protestant pulpit, and far less than formerly from the Catholic, but little children are still taught it by the Roman Church, and it is allowed to be believed in by other Christian bodies.

Many Protestant ministers still believe in a literal hell, and in the doctrine of salvation through Jesus from its physical agonies. And what priest of Rome disbelieves in hell's reality? A booklet written by a Catholic clergyman on the terrible sufferings of the damned was shortly

ago in circulation. Yet the Roman Catholic priest in *Meeting Point* of December 6th avoided all reference to the place of everlasting torture, in explaining what was intended to be understood by the question "Are you saved?"

I would have liked the opportunity of asking the pious panellists "Did God's supposed Son get himself crucified to save humanity from states of mind?" and "Was he acclaimed Saviour of the World on that account?" Of course, they were able to get away with their hypocritical show unchallenged, and very many of their vast audience no doubt accepted their explanations as satisfactory, especially those who have not got round to disbelief in God and heaven, but to whom hell is a foolish, old fashioned notion. In putting forward a mental hell as the punishment indicated by the question, the panellists were reflecting their Churches' policy of alignment with modern opinion on the subject. They deliberately misrepresented what they and anyone conversant with Christian doctrine knew to be the true meaning behind the words "Are you saved?"

To admit the reality of hell would be to provoke ridicule; to deny it would make God's salvation plan meaningless and deprive Christ of his title to Saviour of Mankind. This Christmas his birth was commemorated as that of humanity's Redeemer. The joyous bells rang out on Christmas Eve in eulogy of the Holy Babe born to save Mankind from what?—states of mind?

FOLLOW WHICH LEADER?

To be like Jesus meek and mild
(Tell atheists to go to hell . . .)
And suffer every little child
(But brandish the sword at them as well),
Praise God and love and fealty
(Let reason and beauty die in shame)
And while you bless the family
Divide and break it in God's name
So, in a pious paradox,
Attempt His way of life to follow
Or better still prepare for shocks
And praise him as you praise Apollo.

K.M.

Early English Copernicans

By F. A. RIDLEY

BEYOND any doubt, one of the major scientific turning points in human civilisation, was represented by what has been aptly termed the Copernican revolution. Not only did the heliocentric theory entirely revolutionise the science of astronomy, it perhaps influenced even more decisively and profoundly revolutionised human philosophical thought, and in particular the traditional religious concepts originally derived from within the perspectives of a geocentric universe.

Copernicus died in 1543, almost simultaneously with the publication of his masterpiece, *The Revolution of the Heavenly Worlds*. The work was dedicated to Pope Paul III, a Renaissance pope of dubious orthodoxy, and it did not incur any immediate clerical censure from Rome, though Luther sharply condemned it. This was perhaps due to a dishonest preface appended posthumously by its first editor, a Lutheran theologian named Osiander, which relegated Copernicus's heliocentric theory to the status of a mere hypothetical speculation. This was certainly not the view of Copernicus himself or of his more unequivocal followers.

For the next 66 years (1543-1609) the period between the initial publication of his system to Galileo's discovery of the telescope in 1609—which soon put the heliocentric astronomy on an unassailable foundation—controversy raged fiercely around the new scientific hypothesis. In the Catholic lands of the Counter-Reformation, the fear of the Inquisition which burned at the stake the most famous Copernican of his time, Giordano Bruno (1600)* and was subsequently to condemn Galileo (1616 *et seq*), the controversy attracted was more or less forced underground, but in Protestant lands, where freer intellectual conditions existed, the heliocentric theory became the subject of an animated controversy and attracted influential adherents even before Galileo's empirical discoveries put the whole matter into an entirely new and radically different perspective.

An early centre of Copernican propaganda was Elizabethan England, where English Renaissance was represented by a galaxy of speculative, as well as literary geniuses. It will suffice here to recall such illustrious (and unorthodox) names as Francis Bacon, Sir Walter Raleigh and Christopher Marlowe. Italian fugitives like Bruno (who resided for some time at Oxford) rigorously criticised the pre-Renaissance scholastic theories still in vogue. But the great Polish astronomer also had his English disciples in influential scientific circles.

In a pamphlet published here a few years ago, a modern countryman of Copernicus, Mr. Henryk Huckharzyk, supplied us with some most informative details about these early English disciples of Copernicus. The first mention of Copernicus's *magnum opus* in England is to be found in 1566 in the catalogue of the library of Sir Thomas Smith, the first Regius Professor of Civil Law at Cambridge, who had travelled on the Continent between 1540 and 1543 and, no doubt, obtained his copy there. It seems clear that the great book soon attracted attention in learned circles. For 13 years after Professor Smith's return, there appeared a book entitled *The Castle of Knowledge*, the author of which, a well-known scholar of

the day named Robert Recorde, defended the new theory in a spirited dialogue, in the course of which he affirmed that "Copernicus, a man of great learning, of much experience and of wonderful diligence in observation", had revived the heliocentric theory of Aristarchus of Samoa, a classical Greek astronomer (3rd century BC) who had propounded the theory that the sun, not the earth, was the centre of the universe.

Recorde, however, declined to enlarge on the subject—perhaps for fear of the Marian Catholic persecution then at its zenith in 1536. A few years later when the more liberal Protestant regime of Elizabeth had succeeded Bloody Mary, several pro-Copernican books appeared, one of them by the celebrated Sir John Dee, better remembered now as one of the more famous English professors of the dubious "royal art" of astrology, but also (as our Polish author reminds us) an astronomer and geographer. Even the great astronomer Kepler, dabbled in astrology.

The greatest of the early English Copernicans was, however, Thomas Digges (1546-1595). Digges, also a leading contemporary mathematician and astronomer, translated Copernicus, besides issuing a major work of Copernican astronomic theory entitled, *A Perfect Description of the Celestial Orbs, according to the most ancient doctrines of the Pythagoreans lately reissued by Copernicus and by Geometrical Demonstration Approved*. Digges, however, was not an orthodox Copernican. For he outspokenly maintained the infinity of the universe, a problem which Copernicus had prudently (perhaps for fear of ecclesiastical censure) left open for future philosophical research. Moreover, whilst Copernicus appears to have regarded the sun as the centre not only of the solar system but of the entire universe also, Digges boldly proclaimed: "This orb of stars fixed infinitely up extendith in altitude spherically and therefore immovable, the palace of felicity garnished with perpetual shining glorious lights innumerable, far excelling our sun in both quantity and quality". It may be relevantly added that modern telescopic (and radio) astronomy has confirmed this brilliant speculation of Thomas Digges.

Though Digges was the most original of the English Elizabethan Copernicans, he was not the best known, nor a major scientific figure in his time. These distinctions must be reserved for William Gilbert, the discoverer of magnetism and physician to Queen Elizabeth I. In his *De Magnete* (1606), Gilbert earned the special praise of Galileo.

Perhaps the most intriguing as well as most unexpected advocacy of Copernican astronomy in Elizabethan England, occurred however in a most unlikely quarter and is not mentioned by our Polish authority. This occurs in *The Man in the Moon*, probably the first science fiction story in English literature, written (from internal evidence) about 1600 but published posthumously in 1638 by Francis Godwin, an Anglican clergyman who eventually became Bishop of Hereford (and grandfather of Dean Swift).

Godwin's Spanish hero flies to the moon in a chariot drawn by geese (!), where he finds everything larger than life and even duller (why are literary Utopias always so deadly dull?) Perhaps to enliven the monotony of the lunar voyage, the author suddenly introduces a vigorous argument in favour of the astronomy of Copernicus—then presumably little known in Anglican clerical circles,

(Concluded on page 20)

* According to a recent publication, Bruno was not actually condemned on account of his heliocentric advocacy, but rather because of pantheistic speculations inimical to Christian doctrines that he derived from it. But the affair Bruno certainly did Copernican astronomy no good in Rome.

This Believing World

Those exciting Sundays when religion was so entrancingly put over on TV, appear to have vanished more or less completely. At all events, on ITV it continues its heavenly mission generally after 11 p.m. for five minutes or so, and it does not appear even then to do much harm. We get mostly a parson or priest answering questions put by out-and-out believers, "but . . .". On the programmes we have heard most of the questions seemed utterly irrelevant and childish.

★

One true believer and honest doubter actually asked why the Churches never "did anything", and when asked what did he suggest, he became as dumb as the gentleman described in Isaiah 53, 7. In actual fact, any "good" the Churches did or do is secularistic. What else? To feed the hungry and help the sick—what is that but secularism? Or to put it another way—of what use is belief in Jesus or a copy of the Bible to a man dying of hunger, or of an illness requiring medical attention?

★

Mr. Randolph Churchill has met Mrs. Dixon, who "prophe-sied" the murder of President Kennedy. Writing to the London *Evening Standard*, he described her as a "remarkable" woman. Anybody who could get such remarkable publicity all over the world certainly must be remarkable. Though in fairness to Mr. Churchill, he claims he had never heard of her prior to their meeting. In any case he insists that Mrs. Dixon never "prophesies", she only "sees". If this is true, it is rather strange she never saw the assassin.

★

However, Mrs. Dixon told Mr. Churchill that early in 1965 he "would receive a proposition", and that "1965 would be very favourable" for his fortunes. As the eldest son of a famous and very wealthy father over 90 years old, Mrs. Dixon no doubt did "see" something which does not require a "seer" at all. We ourselves prophesy that during 1965 there will be lots more trouble in the USA over the negro problem, and probably in Africa as well. Only we won't get any credit for our remarkable prophesies.

★

Just think of it the Rev. I. Roose-Francis of Bourne-mouth wants to abolish the Mothers' Union! That holy and outrageous group of true Christian women—perhaps the only ones in the Church of England—who oppose above everything else that hellish doctrine of divorce. Every mother in the Union must be grateful that their Institution has so valiantly fought for Jesus, his teachings, and above all his miracles, hell, and heaven. And a vicar wants to abolish it! Whatever is the matter with the Church—or is it with its parsons? Isn't there a scrap of unity left anywhere in it?

★

We are glad to see that Dr. J. C. Heenan has no illusions about the decline of belief in this country. "Most people" he declared (*News of the World*, December 12th, 1964) "practise no religion because no one has ever taught them the true facts about the Faith". Now if people believe very little about "the Faith", it is not because they have never been taught "the true facts" about it.

★

The real reason why so many people these days refuse to worship or go to church or bother at all with Christianity is that they have found it out. All its teachings about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, as well as about its hosts of miracles, devils, and angels, are simply silly. And not all the Dr. Heenans in the world could prove otherwise.

Swedish Moral Rearmers at Sheffield

"I HOPE that the British Church and people will not allow themselves to become the voice of atheism in a crumbling modern world" said a Swedish Moral Rearmer at a meeting in Sheffield on January 2nd. Dr. F. Richter, a nose and throat specialist (whose wife is a niece of the late Dag Hammarskjöld) was deploring a visit to Sweden by the Bishop of Woolwich, and the publication of *Honest to God* in Swedish translation. Dr. Robinson should stay in his diocese "until he finds some faith in God", said Dr. Richter (*The Yorkshire Post*, 4/1/65). "We do not expect a British bishop to go to Scandinavia and spread moral confusion". That Dr. Robinson might spread confusion, we can well believe, but it would be theological not moral. But we do not expect a Moral Rearmer to make the distinction.

Another Swedish speaker at the MRA meeting, Sten Westling, a tutor at a teachers' training college, condemned the Swedish Parliament's threat "to remove the Christian basis of education." Two million people had signed a demand to stop this move, he said, and parents and teachers should be watchful that it was not "slipped through Parliament."

EARLY ENGLISH COPERNICANS

(Concluded from page 19)

but so much superior to the traditional views of Ptolemy and Aristotle. It certainly seems surprising that an Elizabethan cleric, particularly one destined to hold high office in his church should have held Copernican views as early as about 1600. It was perhaps for this reason that its author did not publish his pioneer work of science fiction in his own life time.

It would seem to be clear from the above that, far from being the obscure scientific heresy that it is so often depicted as being before Galileo, the heliocentric theory was already widely accepted by eminent scientists in the Protestant atmosphere of Elizabethan England, where freedom of speculation evidently existed to a much greater extent than upon the Continent. Copernican astronomy was already a major intellectual force, even before Galileo turned his glasses towards the sky on that epoch-making night in 1609 and then finally deposed the earth from its immemorably unique pre-eminence as the centre of the universe.

Urgent Appeal

We feel your attention should be drawn to a trial due to take place in Madrid this month arising out of an appeal made to the Supreme Tribunal by defence lawyers representing three Spanish workers against sentences meted out against them by the Tribunal of Public Order on August 4th, 1964.

Francisco Calle, José Cases and Mariano Pascual were arrested at the beginning of 1964 and after trial were condemned to sentences of 6 years 4 months, 5 years and 3 years 3 months respectively with fines ranging from 25,000 to 100,000 pesetas.

We are therefore calling upon world democratic public opinion, on working class trade union organisations, and on all organisations and individuals who defend liberty and justice, to send telegrams, letters of protest, and petitions for their release on behalf of these men to the Minister of Justice, Sr. Iturmendi and to the President of the Supreme Tribunal of Madrid, Spain.

What were the "crimes" of these three men? The struggle for the right to have working class trade unions, for the right to strike and for the freedom to hold meetings and for freedom of the press, as recognised by the Charter of Human Rights approved by the United Nations in San Francisco, which is now trampled on by the Franco regime.

We would like to assure all those who respond to our appeal for the release of these three men that this pressing call comes to them direct from Spain.

A. Roa, Secretary,
National Confederation of Labour of Spain in Exile

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street.) Sunday Evenings

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

British Humanist Association (13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W.8.), Friday, January 15th, 7 p.m.: PATRICK and ELIZABETH VAN RENSBERG, "The Swaneng Hill School".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, January 17th, 6.30 p.m.: DAVID TRIBE and Rev. BILL MATTHEWS, "Christian Unity".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1.), Sunday, January 17th, 7.30 p.m.: BRUCE SINCLAIR, "Moscow".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1.), Sunday, January 17th, 11 a.m.: Dr. E. SEELEY, "Developments in Higher Education".

Tuesday, January 19th, 7.30 p.m.: Two British Humanist Association Counsellors, "Humanist Counselling".

Notes and News

MUCH was made of the Pope's recent gift of his jewelled tiara to the world's poor. It has now turned up in New York, apparently having been given to Cardinal Spellman as a thanks offering for the sums raised by American Catholic Relief Services, and will be exhibited throughout the United States before finally being placed in a shrine of the Immaculate Conception at Washington. Roy Shaw, of the University of Keele, complained to the *Catholic Herald* (1/1/65) that "Surely the original intention was that the crown should be sold and the money given to the poor, and not be merely transferred from one of the Church's pockets to another". Certainly the Pope's gesture was reported as Mr. Shaw indicated; it now turns out to have been somewhat empty—a publicity stunt, in fact. But the *Catholic Herald* had its reply. "Objections to exhibiting the tiara must", it said, "be weighed against the good which will be achieved. Cardinal Spellman's motive is to encourage in US Catholics a feeling of Christian brotherhood for their fellow men and to appeal to their generosity".

★

THE *Herald* made no reply to another letter in its same

issue. Cyril G. Wilde of Pinner, Middlesex, pointed out that whereas Catholics represent only about 10 per cent of the population of this country, "their percentage of convicted criminals is apparently much higher". Moreover as the paper itself had reported on December 4th, nearly half the occupants of the only existing rehabilitation centres for alcoholics are Catholic. What is the reason for this lamentable state of affairs?" Mr. Wilde asked—and hoped that "some knowledgeable persons" would enlighten him in the columns of the *Catholic Herald*.

★

MRS. Brenda Wolfe of Wigan, Lancashire, thinks that the clergy should stay celibate, that "no decent, right-minded man ought to have the effrontery to ask any woman to take on such a lousy job" as being a parson's wife. "Never marry a cleric", Mrs. Wolfe warns in the January issue of the Anglican monthly *Prism* and, as the wife of a parish priest, her opinion has weight. Accompanying her husband to "tough parishes" and "mucking in" with the rest of the community doesn't worry her. The trouble is being "almost always second-best . . . almost like being the favoured mistress of a married man." Then there are the Mothers' Union and sales of work. "Serving the Church ought not to mean raising money for a carpet down the aisle—but it so often does." At 21, Mrs. Wolfe had "high-minded visions of entering with my husband into the great work of converting the world"; now, at 28, she is "surrounded by four children, tied to the house, expected to turn up at every cat-hanging, and feeling like a widow, as my husband is always on duty." A woman has a right to share in her husband's life, she says, but "For a clergy wife, it is an occasional privilege."

★

JUST over seven years ago, another clergyman's wife, Mrs. Ruth Saxon, was worried about the Mothers' Union, and decided with her husband to found an alternative organisation, the Churchwomen's Guild. The Guild admits single and divorced women—who are both barred by the Mothers' Union—and has been blessed by the Bishop of Manchester. But Mrs. Saxon doesn't see the two bodies as rivals. "On the contrary", she says, "we enrol members through the Guild for the Union" (*The Sunday Times*, 3/1/65).

★

THE Rev. I. Roose-Francis, vicar of the Church of Holy Epiphany, Bournemouth, might not thank Mrs. Saxon for enrolling women for the Union, which he regards as "useless, archaic and time-wasting", and "a divisive influence in family worship." The Mothers' Union central secretary, Mrs. Llewellyn-Davies, contested the vicar's words. "We are neither a divisive element nor a power bloc", she said (*The Sunday Times* 3/1/65). "We are an organisation of married women who believe in Christian family life based on the Church's teaching that marriage is a lifelong partnership".

★

THE November issue of the *American Rationalist* paid fitting tribute to the late Joseph McCabe, who was born on November 11th, 1872, and whose writings were described by William J. Fielding as "so extensive—one might well say encyclopedic". McCabe had, said Mr. Fielding, the intellectual equipment of a social and biological scientist and historian and "in addition had the unique, if painful, experience and background of several years in monastery life to give validity to his strictures on the stultifying results and erosive evils of ecclesiasticism".

The Crucifixion, a Libellous Accusation Against the Jews

By SOLOMON ZEITLIN

(Continued from page 14)

In presenting historical facts an impartial historian must deal with all the sources available and also take notice of the different versions of the text found in manuscripts. As has been noted, different accounts are given about the Pharisees and the high priests in connection with the death of Jesus. We have noted that the words "to death" in the text are not found in some manuscripts. It is axiomatic that no Jew was ever entrusted with the copying of the manuscripts of the Gospels. It was done by pious, devout Christians, but nevertheless we find different versions.

A historian must inquire into the motive that led to the commission of an act. What motive did the Pharisees and the high priest have to plot to put Jesus to death? According to the Gospels it was the charge of blasphemy. When Jesus was arrested and brought before the high priest, he was asked, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" To this Jesus answered, "I am and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power (God) and coming in the clouds of heaven."¹⁸ According to the Gospels, when the high priest heard this he rent his clothes and turned to the members of the council with these words, "Ye have heard the blasphemy, what think ye?"¹⁹ The members of the council answered that Jesus was liable to death. According to the Judaean law a person was liable to death only when he cursed God with the name of God, "cursing God by name of God."²⁰ Jesus did not curse God.

Jesus's declaration that he would sit on "the right hand of Power (God)," cannot be considered blasphemy nor false prophecy. Many pious Jews looked forward to the future world where they would sit in the company of God and enjoy the Divine Glory.²¹

If we should grant, which I do not, that Jesus was tried as a religious offender why was he brought before Pilate? The Judaeans had the authority to inflict capital punishment on one who had transgressed religious laws. We know this not only from tannaitic literature but also from Josephus.²² If Jesus was arrested for blasphemy or for any other religious offence why did a Roman cohort come to arrest him?²³ What had the Roman authorities to do with the arrest of a man who had committed a religious sin against Judaism?

Jesus was arrested and put to death as a rebel against Rome and was crucified as the king of the Judaeans. A serious historian can come to only one conclusion—the religious leaders of the Judaeans had no part in the condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus. The early leaders of the church, in order to substantiate the truth of Christianity, placed the onus of the condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus upon the leaders of the Jews. This was the purpose of Christian theology. It must be emphasised that the Apostolic Fathers did not make the accusation of the crucifixion against the Jews. In all of their disputations against Judaism they did not accuse the Jews of the crucifixion of Jesus. Ignatius in his Epistle to the Trallians in giving the history of Jesus wrote that he was of the family of David and "was persecuted under Pontius Pilate."²⁴

Summing up, we must assert that the accusation against the Jews of the crucifixion of Jesus is theological not historical. Historically the religious leaders of the Jews had no part in it. The following statement by Daane is false: "A Jewish denial of history is, as any denial of

history, in the long run futile. There is no justification for a denial of the recorded history of Christ's death, for the authenticity of the records is not doubted by responsible scholarship." Daane wrote as a medieval theologian, not as a historian. Responsible scholarship must deal objectively with the records. In doing so I must say, as a historian, that the verdict is—for the Jews not guilty.

It is regrettable that the libel against the Jews, an innocent people, for the crucifixion of Jesus is reiterated again and again not only in theological writings but also in the secular. In *Life*, March 27th, 1964, wherein appeared a photo essay on "The Greatest Story Ever Told" the caption reads, "While the Sanhedrin, the governing council of rabbis, was plotting his death, Jesus went into the city with his apostles for Passover." I pointed out in a letter to *Life* that in the New Testament it is never mentioned that there was a *council of rabbis* and that the caption is a distortion of historical fact, unjust to the spiritual leaders of a people. This letter was not published and I received the stereotyped reply that it could not be included due to space limitations. In the April 17th issue there was a note, "Some historians believe that there were two Sanhedrins or councils, and the one that tried Jesus was the state council, not the religious council of rabbis." It was stated that *Life's* caption of March 27th was based on the New Testament. My contention in the letter was that *Life's* caption of March 27th is not based on the New Testament since there is no mention in it of a *council of rabbis*.

Daane further states, "It was the chief priests and elders who moved among the rabble on the night²⁵ of Jesus's trial inciting them to cry 'Crucify him' Matt. 27: 30 (read 27: 20) . . . All this is not a fabric of prejudice against the Jews but historical record."

Let us now examine historical records. (I wish to emphasise again in this essay that I am not dealing with any theological problems or hypotheses but am analysing the records as a historian.) Pilate, according to the Gospels, sought to take advantage of the custom prevalent in Judaea of releasing a prisoner for the Passover Festival. He asked the Judaeans whether they wanted Barabbas, who was a robber, to be released or Jesus. According to Matthew 27. 20 "But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus." The Evangelist states further, "Pilate said unto them: What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all said unto him: Let him be crucified." According to Mark 15. 9, "Pilate answered them saying: Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Judaeans? . . . But the chief priests moved the people that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them: What will ye then that I shall do (unto him) whom ye call King of the Judaeans? And they cried out again: Crucify him." In Luke 23. 1-3 there is the following account, "And the whole multitude of them arose and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying: We found him perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar saying that he himself is annointed king. And Pilate asked him saying: Art thou king of the Judaeans? And he answered him and said: Thou sayest it." According to John 18. 28-40 we have the following "Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment and it was early . . . But you have a custom that I shall release

unto you one at the Passover: Will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Judaeans? Then cried they all again saying: Not this man but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber."

According to Matthew the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitude to ask for the release of Barabbas and Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus, who is called Christ. Mark, on the other hand, said that Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus, the King of the Judaeans. Luke relates that the accusation against Jesus was that he was a rebel against Caesar and prevented the people from paying tribute to Rome. In this Gospel there is no mention that the chief priests and elders persuaded the people to ask the release of Barabbas. John records that Pilate asked the people whether he should release Jesus, the King of the Judaeans or Barabbas. Again we do not find any mention of persuasion. Luke and John do not speak of the elders in connection with the cry crucify him. According to John the chief priests and the servants said crucify, crucify him.²⁶

As we know, Pilate was treacherous and cunning. The high priest, a hireling of the Roman authorities had sufficient reason to fear a trap, lest Pilate might accuse him later of having had a share in the conspiracy against Rome. The apprehension of the high priests was very strong. They were fearful that Pilate was scheming to involve them as accomplices of Jesus in his claim to be King of the Judaeans. When Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your king?" the chief priests protested, "We have no king but Caesar." According to John, when Pilate wrote the *titulus* "the King of the Judaeans" the high priests protested and asked him not to write "the King of the Judaeans but that he (Jesus) said 'I am king of the Judaeans'".²⁷ The high priests feared the inscription on the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Judaeans," because Pilate might use it as a weapon to punish them.

A historian in examining historical records must pierce through all the documents without prejudice. The records which we have presented do not agree. There are discrepancies and additions. From the accounts in the four Gospels we must conclude that the spiritual leaders of the Judaeans had no part in the crucifixion of Jesus. The high priests were the puppets of Rome and acted as quislings. An impartial historian would not accuse the Norwegian people of atrocities committed by Quisling in delivering Norwegian patriots to the Nazis.

Many Judaeans who were present at the trial were grieved when Jesus was condemned to death. When he was led to be crucified, Luke tells us, "There followed him a great company of people and of women which also bewailed and lamented him."²⁸ Indeed many Judaeans were distressed on seeing Jesus led to death.

(To be concluded)

18. Mark 14. 61-62; Matt. 26. 63-64; Luke 22. 69.

19. Ibid.

20. Cf. M. Sanh. 7. 5.

21. See Psalms 110. 1. A Psalm of David Adonai said unto my lord. Sit thou at my right hand.

22. See note 6.

23. Cf. John 18. 12.

24. 9.

25. The Gospels have in the morning.

26. 19. 6.

27. 19. 21-22.

28. Luke 23. 27.

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In Praise of Mary Kingsley

PROBABLY there would be no trouble in Africa today if the English Government had listened to the sensible recommendations of Mary Kingsley. Dorothy Middleton tells the story in her instructive *Victorian Lady Travellers* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 25s.). In stout Victorian skirts and prim head-dress, Mary voyaged in Africa. Faced with the cannibal Fans, she realised "We each recognised that we belonged to that same section of the human race with whom it is better to drink than to fight". She was gallant and shockingly tough.

Born in 1862, she grew up to find that she had to support her own feckless family by editing *The English Mechanic*. Her hobbies during this period were rearing gamecocks and reading anything she could lay hands on. In 1892, her parents died within a few weeks of one another, and Mary set out for Africa. On her first expedition, she spent a night talking to a witch doctor who wanted her opinion about a patient, she was able to help, for she had been brought up an agnostic. She ate the most terrible food and learnt to navigate a boat.

On her second expedition she explored mangrove swamps where crocodiles endeavoured to improve their acquaintance. She walked through forests and had a frill of leeches round her neck like an astrakan collar. No peril could paralyse her inquiring mind. She speaks in her books of a herd of hippos strolling towards her with "all the flowing grace of Pantechnicon vans in motion". She fell crashing onto a game pit-trap with terrible spikes. One of her native boys looked down at her and asked, "You kill?" "Not much", she replied. Once, when she slept under a tree, she was puzzled by a strange smell. She located some grisly human remains hanging in a bag overhead. She calmly tipped these into her hat "for fear of losing anything of value to research workers."

And what had this splendid woman to tell the people in England when she returned to her home? She assured them that missionaries did more harm than good by destroying the restraints of the African's ancient religion, and roundly asserted that gin was better for the natives than palm wine, and she held that the traders who really understood the people should take over all responsibilities of administration.

She died of enteric fever after having volunteered to nurse Boer prisoners in the South African War. "I never struck such a rocky bit of the valley of the Shadow of Death in all my days", she observed before she succumbed.

Her amazing exploits and her vigorous expression of novel opinions make her a real heroine for freethinkers.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

"Censorship"

FREETHINKERS, who have suffered so often from censorship, cannot avoid an interest in a new journal which exists solely to review the world censorship position. Professional censors, and the religious or political pressure-groups which are their amateur counterpart, are noted more for their indiscriminate enthusiasm (and sometimes cowardice under pressure) than for their good taste—or good sense.

The first issue of the quarterly *Censorship* (Autumn 1964, 2s. 6d.) reveals the manifestations of prejudice in several different countries, but exposes the sameness of the authoritarian or uncultured mind in politically diverse societies.

The positions in Britain, Australia, France, East Germany, West Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, the Soviet Union, the USA South Africa and Yugoslavia are all subjected to searching analyses, and many of their absurdities are exposed.

It is noteworthy that some contributors—obviously writing from the "inside"—are unable to give their names. As one contributor states, "the miracle is that—writers continue to write and that—editors continue to fight" and that "despite all negative

and positive controls, independent, serious work continues to appear . . . Perhaps the explanation of the miracle is simple; perhaps people whose vocation is writing creatively are constitutionally more intelligent than people whose vocation is control and censorship." We can, I think, wholeheartedly agree with this observation.

Supporters of the extreme Right or Left are unlikely to find this journal praiseworthy as a whole, although they will find it (like the curate's egg) good in parts, particularly when it is attacking their respective antagonists on the opposite wing. Those with libertarian inclinations will, however, welcome it. *Censorship* is published by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and is edited by M. Mindin, with Professor Richard Hoggart (Britain), Daniel Bell (USA), Ignazio Silone (Italy), Armand Gaspard (Switzerland) and Anthony Hartley (Britain) as Advisory Editors. It can be obtained (2s. 6d. per copy or 10/- per annum) from Summit House, 1-2 Langham Place, London, W.1.

D.S.

CORRESPONDENCE

ATHEISTS AND AGNOSTICS

The perpetually recurring feud between atheists and agnostics, while it may add spice to life, is somewhat unnecessary and ridiculous. Granting that the term "agnostic" may have been coined to avoid the persecution by certain "love-one-another" Christians it may also be claimed that certain atheists like to retain their title as proof of their courage, militancy, and willingness to be martyrs for the "Cause". Of course, Christians have no right to take a perfectly legitimate term like "atheist" and abuse and smear it—atheists may justly be indignant and refuse to be calumniated—but it seems to me that there is no need for friction between atheists and agnostics since the two terms are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary or supplementary.

Both believe that the world of science is the only world that exists on the grounds that there is no evidence (that can withstand criticism) of any supernatural "other" world. Now it may be that such other world(s) do exist, inhabited by gods, angels, devils, demons, goblins, fairies, and whatever else one likes to imagine; but there are no grounds for believing so. Such a supernatural realm must always be unknowable insofar as it remains supernatural, for as soon as anything is truly known about it then it becomes part of the "natural" world. Thus, when the agnostic claims that nothing is known of a God or gods and the atheist says that he does not believe in the existence of a God or gods, then they are both saying the same thing—although possibly from different viewpoints. But if the agnostic denies

that nothing can be known of the supernatural, and if the atheist states that a God or gods do not exist, then they are both adopting dogmatic and untenable positions.

There is a different approach to this subject, another term that may be used that is also supplementary, and it is the description used by Professor Sidney Hook to describe himself as " . . . a still unredeemed, sceptical God-seeker." (p. 115 *The Quest for Being* St. Martin's Press, N.Y.) While it may be prudent to use such an expression in the Land of Liberty it has its merits in that it implies the open mind without the alleged wool-gathering of the agnostic or the alleged dogmatism of the atheist.

But one would think that atheism, etc., etc., was a complete Way of Life in itself instead of just a conclusion to one of the many problems of philosophy. No doubt the "god-ridden" Christian might think so, but the average modern pagan is too interested in other things. Christians tend to regard the humanists and others as "the fox that lost its tail", but we may just as easily regard the Christians as foxes afflicted with warts.

Whenever the term "god" is used it should be prefaced by "Christian" or "Muslim" so that its origin is clear. The modern "God" is actually the "Christian god", a tin-pot tribal deity blown-up by a fluke of history, imposed on Western civilisation, and attenuated by philosophers to its modern form.

D. L. HUMPHRIES.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

I am dismayed and disappointed that even THE FREETHINKER docilely observes convention and anachronistic tradition by keeping up with the face of "Christmas", and wishes its readers the hypocritical and meaningless compliments of the season.

Week in week out we read of the activities of religionists in your columns, we read scathing comments on all aspects of their beliefs and then on their key day you meekly bow the subservient knee to their outrageous and farcical festivity. Even if you contend that the season was originally a "pagan" celebration, this does not carry much weight, and anyway, why continue slavishly observing primitive rites based on the winter solstice in this age of progress and development?

It is an established fact that just as Christianity superimposed its feasts on primitive observances, so monopoly capital takes over Christian feasts for its own purposes of profit and exploitation. Without the twin supports of Christianity and Capital "Christians" would really be written off. And as long as you wretchedly pay homage to this spurious season of "peace and goodwill" the religionists will continue to make capital from it.

B. J. CLIFTON.

[Originally *Pagan, Christmas has, we suggest—and as Christians bemoan—been secularised*—ED.]

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RECENTLY, in a discussion with a Roman Catholic intellectual of my acquaintance I advanced the view already endorsed, I assume, by the readers of THE FREETHINKER as by critical students everywhere, that the *real* crisis of contemporary religion is fundamentally a crisis of credibility. For unless the alleged truths of Christianity can be demonstrated rationally, all the organisational changes now so widely advocated from the Vatican Council to the South Bank will merely be so much waste of time and energy. My Roman Catholic associate, a man of fine and critical intellect agreed entirely with my above proposition. What the Roman Catholic Church needed today, he stated emphatically, was a new and convincing

system of Christian apologetics in place of the massive medieval lumber evolved under far less sophisticated intellectual conditions, in what is almost a prehistoric age.

We agreed (from diametrically opposed views of course; but after all, people on opposite sides of a valley see much the same view) that what the Church needed first and foremost, was a new Thomas Aquinas to bring its theology and philosophy up to date, as the original Aquinas brought Christian apologetics into line with secular knowledge, then primarily based on Aristotle, in the 13th century. Rather to my surprise, my Catholic friend agreed with my description of St. Thomas as an impressive, but archaic, fossil, who bears much the same sort of relationship to the scientific culture and philosophy of today as the still physically impressive torsos of prehistoric dinosaurs and mammoths do to modern zoological organisms; an antediluvian intellectual giant, like his master Aristotle; a man of encyclopedic intellect, but bogged down with the mental furniture of an age now dead and done with.

Pre-evolutionary

I concur with this modernist view of Christianity, for surely the first test that one must apply to any doctrine claiming our intellectual adhesion, is not whether it is useful or plausible, but whether it is in fact, true; whether it actually corresponds with the facts as currently acknowledged. Now if one thing is transparently clear, as my Catholic friend frankly acknowledged (along it would appear with Catholic intellectuals such as the late Teilhard de Chardin SJ, and perhaps Pope John himself) is that this is not the case with Christian apologetics today; they are not even plausible in their officially-endorsed form. For example, the present official theological system endorsed at Rome is still that of Aquinas (1225-74) which takes as its initial starting point, a pre-evolutionary, entirely static (as well as geocentric) conception of the universe which today is as obsolete as the crossbows and battle axes of St. Thomas's medieval contemporaries.

Incidentally, if this be so in Catholic apologetics, the position of the Protestants appears to be even more futile, since it nowadays lacks even the appearance of logical consistency that still gives a superficial impressiveness to the Catholic Thomist system. It may be honest to God, but it is increasingly dishonest to man! For example,

listeners to TV recently had the diverting experience of hearing a famous Protestant theologian openly declare that the really important fact about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, was *not* (as one might naively suppose) that it was true, but that the earliest eye-witnesses, the Christian disciples, believed that it was—a mode of reasoning that surely could be used to demonstrate any miracle recorded anywhere from the ancient virgin birth of Alexander the

Great, to the modern (1914) legend of the angels of Mons. It is almost enough to bring Thomas Aquinas (who at least respected truth as he then understood it) back from his grave! To such a sorry pass indeed, have Protestant apologists now arrived, that they have

even found it necessary apparently, to invent a new verbal jargon in which the mystic term, "Blick," a kind of modern abracadabra, appears to figure prominently. These are surely and clearly the dog-days of Christian apologetics.

"Queen of the Sciences"

This is not of course, by any means the first time that Christianity has confronted contemporary intellectual crises. The science (i.e. pseudo-science) of theology itself, the science of divine things—later exalted in medieval times into "the queen of the sciences"—was originally evolved by the Church (the Pauline Epistle to the Romans represents perhaps its first *magnum opus*) in order to face contemporary Jewish and Pagan criticism. For primitive Christianity had no systematic theology. How could it possibly have had when its cardinal belief was that the end of the world and the return of the messiah in glory were due any day?

Speculative Theology

When however, the messiah unaccountably failed to put in an appearance, then the Church had to come to terms with the world and civilisation, amidst which apparently, it was now due for a long stay. In the intellectual sphere, this took the form of theology which may be defined perhaps as a pseudo-science, unscientific in substance but logical in form (on broadly the same plane as its celestial contemporary astrology) in which essentially animistic ideas (largely derived from pre-Christian Egypt) were expressed in the logical terminology of classical Greek philosophy. Beginning, it would appear, with Paul and his Gnostic associates, who first introduced speculative theology into early Christianity, classical theology reached its zenith in the 4th century in the writings of St. Augustine and in the so-called Athanasian Creed, actually written by a disciple of St. Augustine. Since which distant epoch, the "divine science" has been reformed several times in order to reconcile it with contemporary secular knowledge. St. Thomas "reconciled" Christian theology with the professedly rationalistic philosophy of Aristotle, and Calvin, another disciple of St. Augustine logically developed the theory of predestination on the Protestant side.

In the 19th century, Cardinal Newman's theory of development has given what is, at least potentially, an

VIEWS AND OPINIONS
*The Crisis in Christian
 Apologetics*
 By F. A. RIDLEY

evolutionary basis for future Catholic theology, and it can, perhaps, be assumed that the next reformation of Christian theology will take Newman as its starting point. Already Teilhard de Chardin (unlike Newman a practical scientist himself, who combined the diverse roles of Jesuit and palaeontologist—he discovered Pekin man in the latter capacity) has put forward an ambitious synthesis of traditional Catholic theology with modern evolutionary science. At present, indeed, de Chardin still *non persona grata* at Rome (as St. Thomas Aquinas also was in his own lifetime) looks like eventually becoming the successor of St. Thomas as the “angelic doctor” of the next phase of liberal Catholicism.

Wanted—A New St. Thomas!

Be that as it may, one thing is certain: if Christian theology cannot be (in Newman's phrase) developed to meet the unprecedented intellectual revolution of the 20th

century, it is already doomed. For, we repeat, the essential problem of today is one of truth, not merely of better organisation. To be sure, Rome already commands a superb world-wide organisation. In this precise connection, we recall the remark of the old Prussian general: “There are three and only three perfectly organised bodies in the world, the German General Staff, the Standard Oil Company and the Roman Catholic Church”.

But today, the crisis is beyond the scope of even the most perfect organisation, for it is an intellectual revolution far more profound than in even St. Thomas's day that the Church must survive or else perish. Who will be its new Thomas Aquinas? Whoever he is, he is herewith assured, if successful in his difficult task of restoring Christianity to credibility, of a cardinal's hat in this world and a celestial halo in the world to come. But I do not envy him his task!

Matric Biology and the Dead Hand of Calvinism

By E. R. ROUX

(Recently dismissed from his post as Professor of Botany at the University of the Witwatersrand by the South African Minister of Justice)

It is admitted in most university circles that the standard of science teaching in South African high schools is, with few exceptions, appalling. Science is often taught by humdrum methods which were in vogue half a century ago. The spectacular advances of the post-war period are often completely unknown to the teachers or, if dimly known, incompletely comprehended by them. This is particularly so in the case of biology, which suffers from disabilities peculiarly South African.

The Joint Matriculation Board is a university institution in the sense that the universities are represented on it. It recently decided that matriculation syllabi needed revision. Committees were appointed to prepare drafts for new syllabi, and these drafts have now been circulated for criticism and comment. It is with the draft syllabus for biology that we are particularly concerned.

This syllabus is remarkable, not for what it says, for it says almost nothing, but for what it leaves out. In fact, it is a masterpiece of evasion. The good teacher who at the same time has an up-to-date knowledge of his subject, could, by following this syllabus (and if he were not constrained by the headmaster or the dominee on the school board), give an excellent course in biology; for he is not explicitly forbidden to teach anything. At the same time the bad teacher, relying on ancient school textbooks, would be perfectly happy; for there are no new words referring to things which he has never heard of or does not understand. There is nothing there to force him to read an up-to-date textbook, or a scientific periodical, or to make him feel the need to attend a refresher course.

The silence of the syllabus on the subject of modern biology is a concession to the stick-in-the-mud teacher, but there is another kind of silence which is more studied and of longer standing. This is the silence concerning developmental biology. Developmental biology is a polite term for what is considered in some South African educational circles an almost lewd expression, namely, evolutionary biology. Those who have drafted the syllabus have not only refrained from any overt mention of evolution; they have clearly avoided in the most meticulous way, mention of anything which might indirectly imply evolution. There is, for instance, no suggestion that plants or animals may be “primitive” or “advanced” in structure, no directives for the study of comparative

morphology, no hint that classification may imply phylogenetic relationship. Chromosomes, genes, and the laws of Mendel are mentioned, but not mutations, in spite of the fact that since Hiroshima all educated people know that genes are subject to mutation by radio activity, a fact which every modern school child should know something about. Is it hoped thus to avoid any possible implication that species are not invariable and fixed?

When the draft syllabus was placed before the biology committee of the Joint Matriculation Board at a recent meeting, the Natal representatives were daring enough to raise the question of the place of evolution in the syllabus. The Cape representatives were evasive, but the men from the Transvaal and the Orange Free State definitely said “no.” They declared that they would not tolerate even an indirect reference to the subject.

Now it is an interesting and significant fact that this line-up corresponds exactly with the influence of the Calvinist churches in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, not quite so strong in the Cape and weak in Natal. It is the domineers of the Dutch Reformed churches who have set their faces against evolution and are calling the tune, and so influential are they that scientists, against their better conscience, are forced to toe the line. As Professor Dart once said: “Evolution in South Africa is dynamite.” It goes without saying that Natal was overruled.

It is perhaps significant also that it was the Natal representatives who pleaded for the modernisation of the syllabus in other respects, for instance, for including some reference, however slight, to macromolecular biology and cell structure, a branch of study which has made the biology of 1964 as different from that of 1910 as modern physics is different from the physics of our grandfathers. Some of the Transvaal and Orange Free State representatives actually placed their hands over their ears (quite literally) when the macromolecules DNA and RNA were mentioned.

We may, therefore, take it that the dead hand of Calvinism will, for some time at least, continue to throttle the teaching of biology in our schools. An unhappy metaphor, you may say, for how can a dead hand throttle? However it cannot be gainsaid that there is something morbid about South African Calvinism.

[Reprinted from *The South African Rationalist* November-December, 1964]

The Religious Beliefs of Robert Burns

By NORMAN PATON

Robert Burns, the national poet of Scotland was born in the now immortalised thatched cottage, in Alloway, Ayrshire, on January 25th, 1759. He died in a Dumfries slum on July 21st, 1796. In his comparatively short life-span of 37 years 7 months, Burns was to learn the lesson that "man was made to mourn".

These turbulent toil-weary years cursed him with abject poverty, misfortune and ill health yet, as if in balance, gifted him with the genius that has fixed his name indelibly on world literature.

The Star that rules my luckless lot,
Has fated me the Russet Coat
And damned my fortune to the groat,
But in requit
Has blessed me wi' a random shot
O' country wit.

Burns is beyond being merely the national bard of his country, he is a universal poet, the poet of humanity. The Russians have issued stamps commemorating his bicentenary, the Americans have erected statues to his memory, and the Chinese claim him as a descendant of their race! He was a favourite poet of communist Karl Marx, and was equally revered by capitalist Andrew Carnegie.

What then, were the religious beliefs of this man from impoverished farming stock. Burns was born into, reared and educated in an Ayrshire held in the grip of rigid Calvinist theology. He was indoctrinated in this fearsome religion of hell, devils and eternal suffering, imposed by a tyrannical God on those guilty of even the slightest misdemeanour. Indeed the creed of Calvinism was so brutal and terrifying, that the poet's father, staunch believer that he was, altered the family catechism, in order to portray Omnipotence with a more humane outlook.

However Robert, from all accounts, lived in fear of the Church and its henchmen until his early twenties, by which time he had thrown caution to the wind and committed the most grievest of sins, that of fornication. His penance was to stand on the cutty stool, in full view of the church congregation to be rebuked for his crime by the minister.

But Calvinism was splitting. Liberal "new lights" were arising, insisting upon a refinement of doctrine. Burns sided with them, writing his great satires at the expense of the "Holy Willies". By now he knew where he stood; he was fast becoming an enemy of the Kirk, and with his lampoons against Calvinism being passed around, he was a prickly thorn in its flesh.

Enclosing a copy of the famous *Holy Willie's Prayer* to the Rev. John McMath, a very liberal member of the clergy, who was later expelled, Burns wrote:

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
Their sighin, cantin, grace-proud faces,
Their three-mile prayers an' hauf-mile graces,
Their raxin conscience,
Whase greed, revenge an' pride disgraces
Waur nor [worse than] their nonsense . . .

O Pope, had I thy satire's darts
To gie the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
An' tell aloud
Their jugglin, hocus-pocus arts
To cheat the crowd!

God knows, I'm no the thing I should be,
Nor am I even the thing I could be,
But twenty times I rather would be
An atheist clean
Than under gospel colors hid be
Just for a screen.

In an autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore he gives a clear picture of the religious views of his times. "Polemic divinity," he said, "was putting the country half mad, and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties of Sundays, between sermons, at funerals etc., used a few years afterwards to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue and cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour."

From the same letter, which he wrote in his 28th year, in recollection of his childhood, he admits that an old woman who resided in the family, filled his head with folklore tales of ghosts, devils, faires, witches, dragons, etc., and that her tales had a strong effect on his imagination, "that to this hour in my nocturnal rambles I sometimes keep a sharp look out in suspicious places, and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy, to shake off these idle terrors." Thankfully philosophy triumphed:

Poor gapin, glowerin Superstition!
Waes me, she's in a sad condition!
Fye! bring Black Jock, her state physician,
To see her water!
Alas there's ground for great suspicion
She'll ne'er get better.

Burns's attitude toward superstition is an excellent criterion of his attitude to religion. The seeds of Calvinism had left their mark; for all his scepticism, philosophy and genius, the devilish doctrine of hellfire and brimstone had done irreparable damage to his boyish mind, and carried into manhood the latent fear that there might be something, even when in his common-sense approach he would deem it "old wives' tales". However, even if he couldn't quite shake off the shackles of religion, he was becoming more and more a deist, or what might be termed a mild agnostic.

To Mrs. Dunlop, one of his constant correspondents, until she took offence at the poet's political views, he confessed: "What a flattering idea then, is a world to come! Would to God I as firmly believed it, as I ardently wish it". The poet, however, must be on his guard when writing to that grand lady, who was of course a devout Christian. And, after so expressing his doubts of the hereafter, he softened considerably: "Jesus Christ, thou amiablest of characters, I trust thou art no impostor, and thy revelation of blissful scenes of existence beyond death and the grave, is not one of the many impositions which time after time have been palmed on credulous mankind." Yet the language is hardly that of a believing Christian. How many Christians, even today, address Jesus of Nazareth as "thou amiablest of characters"?

Burns of course often back-pedalled when necessity arose, a habit mistaken by loyal apologists, who would rescue the poet from his rebellious views in politics and religion by some quotation which has obviously been dashed off for safety's sake. Burns himself admitted this:

The shrinking Bard adown the alley skulks,
And dreads a meeting worse than Woolwich hulks,
Though there his heresies in Church and State
Might well award him Muir and Palmer's fate.

Muir and Palmer were of course transported in "Woolwich hulks" to serve 15 years in the slave colony of Botany Bay.

Robert Burns was a genuine sympathiser with revolutionary France against the monarchy and aristocracy, and he attempted to send two cannons to the people's army,

(Concluded on page 32)

This Believing World

The tribulations of Christianity appear to increase every day. The *Daily Sketch* had an article asking "Should Prayer be Compulsory?" at school. For, the paper informed us, "some children it seems, think it's all such a bore". Think of it! After all the solemn protestations in Parliament that prayers are absolutely necessary for the spiritual uplift of our children, the children themselves have the impudence to think them a bore!

★

And aren't they right? The picture the *Daily Sketch* printed of some kiddies at prayer is pathetic, for of course they simply don't know what the prayers really mean, and they certainly don't know to whom they are addressed. (No more, for that matter, does the Pope!) What significance does the word "God" have for them? But like our archaic blasphemy laws, prayer is too firmly entrenched by Parliament to be abolished without a fierce fight.

★

A Roman Catholic primary school has refused to enrol five-year-old twins unless their mother humbly changes her ways and attends church regularly. That, at least, is the excuse, but the real reason seems to be that "the school is now bursting at the seams", so great is the pressure of the children wanting to get in. The mother of the twins protests that she goes to church when she can—but the merciful and all-loving Roman Church is adamant. All or nothing is its motto. And why not?

★

We note that a Roman Catholic priest has been allowed to preach in the parish church of Bexhill-on-Sea—and we cannot help wondering whether a Church of England parson will ever be allowed to preach in a Roman Catholic church? And we don't mean merely preaching a sermon carefully "vetted" for the occasion by the Roman Church. In fact, it would be a good deal more lively to hear a parson with strong views against Catholicism expressing them in a Catholic church and a Catholic priest explaining the errors of Protestantism to a Church of England congregation. Lively, but very discourteous.

★

Courteousness there seemed to be however, in the preliminary announcements for the present week of prayer for Christian unity. The hierarchy in England and Wales has recommended Catholics not only "fervently" to observe the week in their own churches but "to gather with other Christians, in a suitable hall for joint prayer and talks from speakers of different denominations" (*The Guardian*, January 15th). Catholics are not yet "to gather" in non-Catholic churches, it will be noted, but in suitable halls. Still, the British Council of Churches is happy about the situation. For the first time, it said, "a call not just to pray but to pray together has gone out in the name of all the main church traditions." And if they're happy, why should we cavil.

★

We don't. We find it interesting, nevertheless that whereas at Stafford for instance, non-Roman Catholic Christians have arranged to attend mass in a Catholic church, there is no announcement that Roman Catholics are to reciprocate. There will be some interchange of preachers: Methodist and Baptists ministers will preach in Canterbury Cathedral, and Protestants are to join in a united service in the Roman Catholic hall in the same city. And clergy and ministers are—we are told—using the week to get to know one another better. At Potters Bar, Middlesex, the Roman Catholic rector is entertaining other ministers

to supper before they go on to a united service. It no doubt sounds very promising to the ecumenically minded.

★

And we may, of course, expect good TV coverage of the "Sunday Spectacular," the Trafalgar Square open air rally on January 24th.

★

We are glad to put on record a "quote" from the *Daily Express* (January 4th) by the Rev. F. Watts, vicar of Carterton, Oxfordshire: "The joyless puritanical view of Christianity of the Lord's Day Observance Society will drive more decent people further from the Church than the Sunday showing of any of Brigitte Bardot's films ever can do". We are quite sure that no good Christian would be "driven" out of church by the French actress' films, but what Mr. Watts means, no doubt, is that the Lord's Day Observance Society is not a very good advertisement for Christianity. That may be so—but has Christianity ever been anything else but "joyless and puritanical"? Is not Jesus still the greatest man of sorrows that ever lived?

Victor Purcell

I got a great shock on arriving at Dr. Victor Purcell's club as his luncheon guest on January 7th, to hear he had died suddenly five days earlier.

The correspondence arising out of his allegation of a "fifth column" in the Humanist movement is now closed, but I must crave indulgence to record that we were coming together primarily to discuss this topic. Whatever the risk, I should have taken steps to reveal any real evidence he might have had. Now I suppose we shall never know what knowledge or speculation was disturbing him.

A couple of weeks earlier I was speaking to him on the phone and he seemed then to be in full possession of his powers. It was the occasion of the hanging debate, and he observed that people tend to become too emotional about "the sanctity of human life" and that the important issue was whether or not, pragmatically, hanging was a deterrent.

Dr. Purcell was one of the older generation of fast-vanishing academic Rationalists. They did not suffer fools gladly, and could sometimes seem austere and unfeeling to the conventionally sentimental. As the *Times* obituary said, he "acquired a reputation as a well-informed and vigorous controversialist on Far Eastern affairs . . . He could be no less polemical on other subjects dear to him, such as rationalism and humanism of which he was a vigorous defender . . . The truth was that Purcell enjoyed an argument: he relished enemies."

The truth was that men like Purcell were not cold calculators of expediency, but warmly, indeed passionately committed to humanity's greatest need, the search for truth. If they enjoyed an argument, it was because they had well-stocked minds, powers of lucid expression, intellectual integrity and moral courage—attributes becoming increasingly less fashionable, even in Humanist circles. And yet in the ultimate analysis they gained a respect and recognition—Dr. Purcell was awarded a CMG, elected to the Athenaeum, and accorded a *Times* leading obituary—which is seldom vouchsafed to lesser temporisers.

I am not qualified to assess his attainments as an orientalist, but I have no hesitation in saying that the works he published under the pseudonym of Myra Buttle are in the front rank of modern English satire.

D. H. TRIBE

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street,) Sunday Evenings

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, January 24th, 6.45 p.m.: Dr. M. COLE "The Necessity of Birth Control".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, January 24th, 6.30 p.m.: FRANCES MACRAE-GIBSON "Will Science Destroy Man?"

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1.), Sunday January 24th, 7.30 p.m.: L. EBURY "The National Secular Society—Past, Present and Future".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday January 24th, 11 a.m.: Dr. E. POSER "Teaching Humanism to the Young." Tuesday, January 26th, 7.30 p.m.: MARTIN ENNALS "Civil Liberties in 1965."

Notes and News

THIS IS a week of prayer for Christian unity, and at least one bishop of the Church of England has acknowledged the real motive behind ecumenism, namely the fear of atheism. The "great divide is not between different bodies of Christians but between Christians and the world which has rejected God," said the Bishop of Chester, Dr. G. A. Ellison, in his January diocesan leaflet (quoted in the *Staffordshire Evening Sentinel*, 31/12/64). It is vital that Christians should close their ranks and speak with one voice, Dr. Ellison said, in face of the "vast challenge to the whole concept of a God-centred world"; they must "cease to give the impression" that they think it more important to compete and point out each other's shortcomings than to "face together the forces of atheism and materialism". Prejudices and barriers must be broken down, church leaders must continue to consult, and parish priests should "pray, by name, for all the Roman Catholic clergy and Free Church ministers" in their parishes. In this way, the Bishop said, "we could do much to bring home to ourselves the need for unity and the responsibility which we have for promoting it on our own doorsteps".

UNITY seems, however, to have suffered a severe setback in Rome, where Pope Paul has committed what the Federal Council of Protestant Churches in Italy has called "a true scandal" (*The Guardian*, 6/1/65) with his alterations to the ecumenism document. The Italian Protestants find it "amazing" that Cardinal Bea's, Secretariat for Christian Unity and the entire Conciliar Assembly "did not find the necessary courage" to reject what is "not a matter of a simple correction" but a radical violation of the text which now says the contrary of what the bishops wanted it to say." In the original text the altered part read: "By the action of the Holy Spirit, in sacred Scripture the separated brethren find God who speaks to them in Christ." After the amendment imposed by the "higher authority" the text now reads (according to the Protestants): "The separated brethren, invoking the Holy Spirit, seek God in sacred Scripture, as if he spoke to them in Christ."

★

"God speaking to evangelical Christians had been clearly affirmed" the Italian Protestants pointed out. Now it was expressed with "the dubitative and hypothetical formula 'as if' (in Latin, *quasi*)," which "is gravely offensive to the faith of the evangelical Christians and does violence to the most elementary of ecumenical principles." In fact, the meaning of the Pope's amendments was "intentionally anti-ecumenical." And the Protestants recalled the Pope's final "reactionary discourse" to the Vatican Council, when he stressed the "monarchic nature" of the Church and extolled the Virgin Mary as "Mother of the Church." So, said the *Guardian's* Rome correspondent, George Armstrong, the Federal Council of Protestant Churches in Italy "would appear to have written off the Vatican's ecumenical movement," at least as interpreted by Pope Paul VI.

★

ALISTAIR COOKE, the *Guardian's* New York correspondent, has an irritating occasional habit of treating serious matters frivolously—of being over-clever, in fact. He reported on January 10th, for instance that, "The American people have now only ten days to wait before they are liberated from a recurring nightmare which most politicians have come to cherish almost as a staple of American folklore. It is the dire prospect that the White House might suddenly be inhabited by John W. McCormack, the 73-year-old Speaker of the House, a loyal party workhorse who does not boast a vast knowledge of the world outside the ninth district of Massachusetts . . ." (*The Guardian* 11/1/65). Mr. Cooke adequately explained Harry Truman's Succession Act of 1947 and its background; what he neglected to explain was the widespread fear of Speaker McCormack as President of the USA in the event of Lyndon Johnson's death. The danger lay not in Mr. McCormack's party loyalty but his church loyalty. He is a fervent Roman Catholic who has continually used his political influence in the cause of Rome—and often very definitely at the expense of his country. President McCormack would have been no joke.

★

ONE could not possibly imagine him pledging, as President Johnson did in his State of the Union message, to "seek new ways to use our knowledge to help to deal with the explosion in world population and the growing scarcity in world resources." Officials have been drawing particular attention to this passage, the *Guardian's* Washington correspondent, Richard Scott reported (11/1/65), and they are confirming that it is the first time an American President has publicly acknowledged the US government's "intention officially to act in this field."

The Crucifixion, a Libellous Accusation Against the Jews

By SOLOMON ZEITLIN

(Concluded from page 23)

It has been generally assumed that the libellous accusation against the Jews for their alleged guilt, the crucifixion of Jesus, has been the great cause for anti-Semitism. That the Jews crucified Jesus was taught in the schools and preached from the pulpits throughout the ages and has helped to foster animosity towards the Jews and brought great sorrow and dire sufferings upon an innocent people. Many Christians recognise the danger of anti-Semitism and honestly try to eliminate this cancer gnawing the vitals of civilisation.

Daane presents a remedy for the elimination of anti-Semitism. He writes:

The Jewish people would help eliminate anti-Semitism if they would admit, as honesty could do without violating the terms of the Jewish faith, that they did destroy a man. There is little, if indeed anything, of such an admission in current Jewish concern about anti-Semitism. Let Jews, if they must, regard Christ as only a man; But let them admit what honesty and integrity demand—the destruction of a man by their ancient leaders' insistence that he be put to death.

No one can admit that he has committed a crime in which he had no part. The Jewish people, even under duress of anti-Semitism, could not and would not admit that their religious leaders had any part in the crucifixion of Jesus. Daane wrote further that the report of the Anti-Defamation League shows that the liberal churches rather than the conservative and fundamental church are of the opinion that the Jews are not the "most responsible." According to Daane, anti-Semitism is anti-Gospel, and ultimately anti-Christ. He holds that both Gentiles and Jews were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. "The Jew," he writes, "is condemned only if he believes not—as is the unbelieving Gentile." He continues that the Gentile was saved by accepting Jesus and that the Jew can also be saved by accepting Jesus. He propagates "the reunion of Jew and Gentile in the oneness of the Church." He believes that to this ultimate union of Jew and Gentile "Anti-Semitism hinders the Gentile's calling to provoke the Jews to jealousy."

To repeat, this essay is written from the historical angle not from the theological view. I shall not enter into any theological examination, speculation and excogitation regarding Jewish and Christian theology. I have demonstrated that the Jews are guiltless and cannot be blamed for the crucifixion. *They do not need to be saved.* Judaism and Christianity are different, separate religions—each has its own theology. Though Christianity arose in Judaea and its founders were Jews, in the process of time Christianity became a Gentile religion. The roots of Christianity stem from Judaism. The founders of Christianity, to prove that Jesus is the true Messiah Christ, supported themselves on the Pentateuch and the prophets. The Hebrew Bible is holy to both the Jews and to the Christians. Jews and Christians alike draw deep inspiration from these books. Christianity has much in common with Judaism. Christianity arose as a Judaeo-Christian religion. These two religions can and will develop by coexistence and mutual appreciation.

The Jews do not wish to convert Christians to Judaism nor to be converted to Christianity. Shazar, President of Israel, when he recently met Pope Paul VI in Israel, proudly emphasised the prophetic words of Micah:

Let all the peoples walk each one in the name of his God, but we will walk in the name of Adonai, our God forever and ever."

President Shazar uttered these eternal words in the name of the entire Jewry.

Daane wrote further that the membership of the liberal churches hold that the Jews were not "most responsible" for the crucifixion. It is a great satisfaction that the *Christian Advocate*, the official organ of the Methodist Church, in the editorial of January 22, 1948 on my book *Who Crucified Jesus?* said in part as follows:

Caiaphas, the high priest, who was responsible for hailing Jesus before Pilate, was a quisling, thoroughly hated by the Jews and despised even by the Romans. The Sanhedrin, which passed the judgment, was a political clique, quite separate and distinct from the religious group, of the same name, which ruled in all spiritual matters for the Jews. The execution was justified by the Romans on the ground that Jesus was an insurrectionist who plotted a rebellion against the empire, and the Christian church for 20 years was believed by the Romans to be a seditious organisation.

The editorial published in an official organ of one of the foremost orthodox churches shows sincere goodwill towards the Jewish people, a step taken by an orthodox church to remove the libellous accusation against an innocent people.

The Christian world must atone for their guilt towards the Jewish people for using the crucifixion of Jesus as a pretext for enslaving and persecuting the Jews throughout the ages. I do not mean that textual emendations or changes should be made in the Gospels in respect to the crucifixion of Jesus. The Gospels are holy for the Christians as the Hebrew Bible is holy for the Jews. What I do hold is that the Apostles' Creed, which was recited in the early days of Christianity and is still recited in many Protestant churches, should be followed. In this creed it is not stated that the Jews crucified Jesus.

Pope Pius XI, in one of his encyclicals said that in spirit we are all Semites. This attitude and spirit were followed by the great humanitarian and saintly Pope John XXIII. In the dark days of the holocaust when millions of Jews were destroyed in the gas chambers he interceded whenever he could and saved the lives of many. On Good Friday the Catholics, in praying for all peoples, have a prayer for *pro perfidis Judaeis* and they ask God to have mercy on the *Judaica perfidia*. Pope John XXIII ordered to omit the words *perfidis* and *perfidia* in the liturgy of Good Friday.

I trust that the Ecumenical Council will show goodwill to the mother religion by removing the unjustifiable stigma from the Jews by declaring in its schema that historically the Jews are not guilty of the crucifixion of Jesus. This would erase the guilt of the Church for the defamation of an innocent people.

In the early days of Christianity the authorities of the Church maintained that the Jews by their sufferings are a living testimony for the truth of the Church. The Church no longer needs a living testimony for its existence. It is well established. A better mutual understanding and appreciation between Christians and Jews are indispensable for the realisation of the ideas which came forth from the hills of Judaea.

Dr. Zeitlin and Jesus

By H. CUTNER

LET me begin by saying that I cannot understand how such a brilliant scholar as Dr. Zeitlin, in spite of his long array of authorities, should show so little awareness (THE FREETHINKER, December 18th) of the large number of Christian theologians who have filled volumes of earnest and indeed reverent discussion on the subject of the dates of the birth of Jesus and his crucifixion. The books about both problems must surely run into hundreds.

But most of them, shirk, as does Dr. Zeitlin, the one indispensable basis of any problem about Jesus—the proof, the evidence, that the stories of the birth and death of Jesus as given in the Gospels are unimpeachable. There they stand, they claim, like the Rock of Gibraltar literally unshaken by the thunderous attacks of heretics and unbelievers. When Matthew or Luke says that an angel spoke, it *must* be believed for, for Jews and Christians alike, angels are veritable beings residing in heaven ready to obey Almighty God in everything.

Dr. Zeitlin does what almost every Christian scholar does—he takes for granted Matthew and Luke as genuine historians as far as the birth of Jesus is concerned, and he would have added Mark and John, but they give no details of the birth of Jesus. Of course, all the four deal in angels and miracles, and if Dr. Zeitlin believes in the Old Testament miracles, it is only a little step—a page or two—to swallow the New Testament ones also.

Now why does Dr. Zeitlin give us the details from the Gospels and the Church Fathers, Josephus, and other writers, in his search for the birth and crucifixion dates? The answer is very simple. Jews have during the past hundred years or so been increasingly anxious to make Jesus the greatest of all Jews in history. Dr. Klausner, who wrote a “life” of Jesus some thirty years or so ago, was so delighted that a Jew was being worshipped as a God, that he did his utmost in his book to prove what a fine God the Jew Jesus made. (Incidentally, it was Benjamin Disraeli who contemptuously pointed out many years ago that half Christendom worshipped a Jew, and half a Jewess.) The conception of Jesus of modern Jews is a far cry from that which was theirs for nearly 1900 years.

The way Dr. Zeitlin quotes Matthew suggests that he actually believes Matthew is giving us authentic history. He knows, or ought to know, that no one has ever discovered a Matthew anywhere. We know literally *nothing* about him. Nobody knows when he wrote his Gospel, or the date, or the language it was first written in. All we do know is that the first Church writer who mentions him and the other Gospel writers by name is Irenaeus, and the date given us in Church histories is 180AD. But we have *not* got the work of Irenaeus for he wrote it in Greek, except for a very few fragments. What we have is a translation—a poor one at that—in Latin. And though Dr. Zeitlin does mention that Irenaeus gives us a later date for the crucifixion of Jesus than can be inferred from the Gospels, he does not say anything definite about it. In truth, Irenaeus states that Jesus died “an old man”—not just at forty or fifty years of age—and says nothing in this connection that he was *crucified*. And Dr. Zeitlin's article does not mention that the word “crucifixion” does *not* occur in the Gospels; that the word in Greek translated “cross” is *not* cross but “stake”.

In any case, when we come to the birth of Jesus, the fact remains that Matthew says Jesus was born in “the days of Herod”, and therefore this must have been before

4BC; while Luke says it was when Cyrenius was governor of Syria, about 7AD, and the two dates have never been reconciled. Christian scholars have tried to do the impossible, and as they mostly disagree with each other and with Matthew and Luke, they have found that the exact date of the birth of Jesus is quite unknown. As Dr. Zeitlin remarks, it was unknown to the Church Fathers and it still remains unknown. Needless to say, Dr. Zeitlin does not bother about the *place* where Jesus was born. Was it Nazareth or Bethlehem? I think that I am right in saying that nearly every statement in the Gospel and Acts implies that Jesus was born in Nazareth, and not in Bethlehem. Jesus is called Jesus of Nazareth, and never Jesus of Bethlehem. As we now know that there never was a “Nazareth” in Judea or anywhere else in the time of Jesus, Dr. Zeitlin should try his erudition in solving that puzzle.

What about the date of the crucifixion? Dr. Zeitlin tells us that Jesus was crucified by the Romans as a “political offender,” but as he gives no authority for the statement, it may as well be asserted here that the Gospels say it was for the crime of “blasphemy”—whatever that meant to the Romans. The dates he gives are between 30 and 35AD. What is the truth? Simply that nobody knows. Dr. Farrar said it was 30AD, while Renan plumped for 33AD, and I could give a dozen different dates from other authorities—mostly based on guesswork. John E. Remsburg, in his book *The Christ*, who did his best to find out, says that out of one hundred Christian authorities, “23 give 29AD, 18 give 30, 9 give 31, 7 give 32, 37 give 33, and 6 give 35AD.” Dr. Zeitlin's nebulous date is just as good as any other, for *nobody knows*.

Obviously, Dr. Zeitlin believes, as nearly all Jews do, that there was a Jesus, that he did go about “doing good”, and was crucified as told us by the Gospels. He seems blissfully unaware that almost every statement in them has been challenged, and most of them shown to be untrue. Outside the pages of the New Testament, we have no contemporary evidence whatever for anything in the life of Jesus.

But if anybody believes, as Dr. Zeitlin presumably does, in the God of the Old Testament with whom all things are possible, it is easy to believe in everything in the New. There is no *evidence* whatever for the existence of Moses, Noah, David, Solomon, and the other Old Testament heroes, nor is there for most of the characters in the New.

OBITUARY

Charles Stanley, who joined the North London Branch of the National Secular Society in 1958 as a result of its meetings at Tower Hill, has died in Guy's Hospital after a short but painful illness.

Mr. Stanley became deeply interested in the history of the Christian religion and in biblical criticism, and soon became a formidable controversialist, both with pen and speech. Even his opponents learned to respect him, for his accuracy and his erudition.

We can only express our deep sense of loss, by stating his sterling qualities. He hated cant and hypocrisy and was fearless in condemnation of them. He was the most loyal of friends, kind true and honourable. We will miss him more than words can convey.

The General Secretary of the National Secular Society conducted the secular service at South London crematorium on January 12th.

L. AND E. EBURY

THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF ROBERT BURNS

(Concluded from page 27)

an extremely dangerous action, considering that he was employed by the British government as an exciseman. Here he is in revolutionary mood:

Proud Priests and Bishops we'll translate
And canonise as Martyrs;
The guillotine on Peers shall wait;
And Knights shall hang in garters;
Those Despots long have trod us down,
And Judges are their engines;
Such wretched minions of the Crown
Demand the People's vengeance!

Many quotations could be given depicting Burns's views on the clergy, on the church and on religion. To list a few at random:

The Kirk an' State may join, and tell,
To do sic things I maunna:
The Kirk an' State can go to Hell
And I'll gae to my Anna.

Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it!
That Holy robe O, dinna tear it!
Spare't for their sakes, wha aften wear it
The lads in black.

Peg Nicholason was a good bay mare
An' the Priest he rode her sair
Much oppress'd and bruised she was,
As priest-rid cattle are.

Burns's contempt for the Calvinist doctrine helped to revolutionise the religious beliefs of his country. He took the Calvinist devil and teased him, ridiculed him, banished him from theology—then pitied the fallen "Prince of Darkness". Emerson summed it up completely—"neither Luther nor Latimer did more damage to fake theology, than did this brave singer".

Though Christians are fond of laying claim to him, the evidence is quite conclusive that Robert Burns was not in any way a Christian; he was, as I have said, a deist with agnostic tendencies, extremely radical in his epoch. Nowhere are his beliefs so clearly stated than they are in this quotation from one of his letters. "All my fears and cares are of this world: if there is another, an honest man has nothing to fear from it. I hate a man that wishes to be a deist: but, I fear every fair, unprejudiced enquirer, must in some degree be a sceptic."

CORRESPONDENCE

MORAL EDUCATION

I should like to add a few words to Mrs. Margaret Knight's remarks on Roman Catholic education

First, its unhealthy influence not only lowers the level of the scholars' acquirement and standard of judgment, but conditions them into a secret—but solid—hatred of non-Catholics. It is appalling to trace the ferments of social mistrust that cannot be cured by good sense or normal human intercourse. There is a sort of bad colour or bad odour about the infidel that is rarely quite dissipated even in people who have repudiated the Church. Any person with social experience will know this sort of muffled hatred which is poison to intellectual or social understanding.

Second, Mrs. Knight appears to believe that moral education in the school—or the family for that matter—is a difficult subject when RI is abandoned. Such education ought to come from example: morals are caught, not taught. Of course, but the occasions of such natural education are few and far between—the more so when the educator is faced with so many pupils—and they can never be predicted. That is why I think that a sort of moral course should be provided, in spite of some misgivings.

I modestly submit that there may be afforded a sensible, normal course of secular moral education. I remember the first pages of a school manual of moral instruction used many years ago in French public schools. An explorer finds himself alone in a desert of ice; after losing his last match he sees that he will die of cold far from any help. But he does not indulge in sheer despair and lament. Alone, he looks at himself facing death as a man, with dignity and courage. Such is the respect of mankind

within the man, a striking example of faith in humanity. All morality is the expression of that faith, is it not higher than all the commands of a duty? Thus having before us what is the principle of morality, the self respect of man, why not examine the relations of the individual with his neighbour and the society to which he owes much more than he can reproach? His station in nature too, within the animal world; his own circle of domestic companions and the larger one of independent beings? No morality without the feeling of one's own valour and the sense of life within "life." And this can be approached in consistent teaching.

Such are the bases on which it seems, to an old teacher, possible to build an effective secular moral teaching in the school.

LOUIS DOREAU
(Chagny, France).

FEED THE MINDS

A few days ago I received an elegant coloured brochure entitled *Feed the Minds of Millions on the Bible and Christian Literature*. Why it was sent to me, I cannot imagine, as I have never had any religious connections.

I cannot think of anything less suitable on which to feed the minds of millions than the intolerance, violence and cruelty of the Bible.

(MRS.) M. WATSON

BULLFIGHTING

Rolf Hochhuth in *The Representative* blames the Pope for silence, when a word from him might have saved the Jews. A similar situation, of lesser importance exists today involving needless cruelty to animals practised in Spain, Portugal and Latin America, namely the sadistic sport of bullfighting. A word from the hierarchy could easily stop this but the countries involved are bulwarks of the Roman Church so expediency seals lips. But surely it is unethical to tolerate wanton, needless cruelty.

A stoic philosopher and later a Christian monk were both martyred trying to stop the Roman games. Is there today a Christian or a humanist who dares to try to stop the bullfights by jumping into the arena?

Many young women are bullfight fans (after mass!). Children may accompany their parents to be educated in cruelty and to harden their hearts. Would Jesus have patronised a bullfight? Should tourists do so? While the Roman Church may condemn bullfights in theory, in practice it does nothing to stop them.

(DR.) R. LITTLE

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In 1955 I gave two broadcast talks on *Morals without Religion*, in which I suggested that Scientific Humanism was the natural successor to Christianity. The broadcasts caused some excitement: and many Christians protested, with varying degrees of vehemence, that it was a pity I did not know more about the religion I had so irresponsibly attacked.

I thought there might be something in this. Up to the time of the broadcasts, I had been interested in philosophical theism rather than in historical Christianity, about which I knew no more than the average layman who has had a nominally Christian education. So I decided to fill this gap in my knowledge. In the last few years I have studied the Bible diligently, and now, I suspect, know a good deal more about it than the average vicar; and I have also read many books about the origins and history of the Church. This reading has altered my view profoundly.

At the time of the broadcasts, I held two assumptions that were common among the more highbrow type of sceptic. These were, (i) that Jesus, though he was deluded in believing himself to be the long-awaited Jewish Messiah, was, nevertheless, a great moral teacher, and a man of outstanding moral excellence, and (ii) that though Christianity is now rapidly being outgrown, it was a great force for good in its day. In the light of wider knowledge, both assumptions now seem to me to be false. I now incline to the view that the conversion of Europe to Christianity was one of the greatest disasters of history.

"Gentle Jesus"

To deal first with the personality of Jesus. If one reads the Gospels with a fresh mind, one gets a picture of the founder of Christianity that is quite startlingly different from the traditional "gentle Jesus". The conception of Jesus as meek and gentle may derive in part from his refusal to plead his cause before Pilate. But Jesus may well, by this time, have identified himself with the "suffering servant" of Isaiah 53 ("He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth")—and have been consciously fulfilling the role for which he believed he was prophetically destined. In his preaching, he continually extolled loving-kindness and meekness, but, as so often happens, his practice fell short of his precepts. He was, it is true, gentle and affectionate towards his disciples and towards those who took him at his own valuation: and he was tolerant towards self-confessed sinners. But he was a fanatic; and, like most fanatics, he could not tolerate disagreement or criticism. Towards the Pharisees and others who were sceptical of his messianic pretensions, he was often savagely vindictive. Any hint of criticism, any demand that he should produce evidence for his claims, was liable to provoke a torrent of wrath and denunciation. Most of Chapter 23 of St. Matthew's Gospel, for example, is not, as we are encouraged to regard it, a lofty and dignified rebuke: it is what on any other lips would be described

as a stream of invective. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which, indeed, appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness . . . Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" This can hardly be called loving one's enemies.

Jesus, in fact, was typical of a certain kind of fanatical young idealist: at one moment holding forth, with tears in his eyes, about the need for universal love; at the next, furiously denouncing the morons, crooks and bigots who do not see eye to eye with him. It is very natural and very human behaviour. But it is not super-

human. Many of the great men of history (for example, Socrates) have met criticism with more dignity and restraint.

Historical Christianity

To turn next to historical Christianity. It is widely assumed that organised Christianity has been a great force for good. But this view can be maintained on one assumption only: that everything good in the Christian era is a result of Christianity, and that everything bad happened in spite of it. But, as a matter of historical fact, many of the worst features of life in the ages of faith (and later) have stemmed directly from the teaching of the Church. Outstanding among these features are the doctrine of hell, intolerance and persecution, anti-intellectualism, asceticism, otherworldliness, and the condonation of slavery.

The hideous doctrine of eternal torment after death has probably caused more terror and misery, more cruelty and more violation of natural human sympathy, than any religious belief in the history of mankind. Yet this doctrine was unambiguously taught by Jesus. "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. Ch. 14): "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. Ch. 25). "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation" (Mark, Ch. 3).

The Roman Catholic Church still teaches the doctrine of eternal punishment, but the current tendency among Protestants is to say that Jesus's pronouncements on this subject were "symbolic". But no one has yet answered the question why, if Jesus did not intend his statements about hell to be taken literally, he made them in a form that ensured that they *would* be taken literally. Why, in other words, did he deliberately mislead his hearers? If he was God, he must surely have been able to foresee what disastrous results would follow.

Intolerance and Persecution

No other religion has such a bloodstained record as Christianity. During the ages of faith the Church argued,

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Christianity: The Debit Account

By MARGARET KNIGHT

not illogically, that any degree of cruelty towards sinners and heretics was justified, if there was a chance that it could save them, or others, from the eternal torments of hell. Thus, in the name of the religion of love, hundreds of thousands of people were not merely killed but atrociously tortured in ways that make the gas chambers of Belsen seem humane.

Europe, also, was frequently devastated by religious wars, which destroyed a far higher proportion of the population than the global wars of the twentieth century. The Thirty Years' War, for example, reduced the population of Germany by a third.

Anti-intellectualism

Jesus exhorted his followers to "become as little children", and the Church throughout history has extolled credulity, and feared and distrusted the free intelligence. During the Dark Ages the Church was in control of education, and for centuries scarcely anyone who was not a potential priest learned to read or write. One of the most persistent fallacies about the Christian Church is that it kept learning alive during the Dark and Middle Ages. What the Church did was to keep learning alive in the monasteries, while preventing the spread of knowledge outside them. To quote W. H. Lecky, "The period of Catholic ascendancy was on the whole one of the most deplorable in the history of the human mind . . . The spirit that shrinks from enquiry as sinful and deems a state of doubt a state of guilt, is the most enduring disease that can afflict the mind of man. Not till the education of Europe passed from the monasteries to the universities, not till Mohammedan science, and classical free thought, and industrial independence broke the sceptre of the Church, did the intellectual revival of Europe begin" (*History of European Morals*, Ch. IV.). Even as late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, nine-tenths of Christian Europe was illiterate.

Asceticism and Otherworldliness

Jesus was a celibate, who appeared to regard sexual love as displeasing to God. "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Luke, Ch. 20). "There be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matt., Ch. 19). This tendency was even stronger in Paul. "It is good for a man not to touch a woman . . . But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn" (I Cor., Ch. 7). This attitude accounts in part for the strong neurotic and masochistic strain in Christianity.

Jesus believed that the Last Judgment was at hand "Verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel until the Son of Man become" (Matt. Ch. 10). "There be some standing here that shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom" (Matt., Ch. 16). "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt., Ch. 24). "The kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark, Ch. 1).

Jesus's moral teaching was therefore directed mainly towards getting believers into heaven: he showed little concern for the affairs of this world. Later, the Church ceased to believe that the end of the world was imminent, but it still held that this life was no more than a momentary prelude to eternity, and of little importance except as a preparation for the life to come. Thus throughout most of its history the Church has been indifferent to social progress and social reform. It has encouraged its members to regard suffering and misery as part of the inscrutable decrees of Providence; to be patient under

wrong and oppression; to accept evil instead of resisting it: all in the certainty that things would be put right in the next world. To a privileged minority this attitude has obvious advantages, in that it helps to keep the unprivileged majority resigned to their lot, but it has retarded human progress for centuries. The emancipation of slaves and of women, and factory reform in the nineteenth century are three progressive struggles which the laity waged themselves with little or no support from the clergy.

Slavery

There is no justification for the common claim that Christianity was responsible for the abolition of slavery. The negro slave trade—a far more infamous practice than slavery in the ancient world—was initiated, carried on and defended by Christian men in Christian countries. To quote H. A. L. Fisher, "It is a terrible commentary on Christian civilisation that the longest period of slave-raiding known to history was initiated by the action of Spain and Portugal, France, Holland and Britain, after the Christian faith had for more than a thousand years been the established religion of Europe" (*History of Europe*, Chap. 23).

The abolition of slavery took its first impetus from the French Revolution. It was largely the work of unbelievers. Christians, like William Wilberforce, who opposed the slave trade were far from typical: the attitude of most of the Churches towards abolition was in America actively hostile, and in Britain (to use Wilberforce's own words) "shamefully lukewarm". The Churches, of course, had no difficulty in citing scriptural authority for their attitude. The Old Testament sanctions slavery (cf. Leviticus 25, 44-46): the New Testament contains no condemnation of it: and St. Paul told slaves to obey their masters (Colossians, 3, 22). (The Greek word for slave, *doulos*, is wrongly translated in the New Testament as "servant").

The Establishment

The indictment against Christianity is formidable: and when Christians today grow indignant about obscurantism, intolerance and ideological persecution in Communist countries, they would do well to remember that the Church in the ages of faith had a far worse record. This is not to deny that the Church has also done much good; so, too, has Communism. But the crucial fact, surely is that, as Voltaire remarked, men who believe absurdities will commit atrocities. One of the best ways to improve men's behaviour is to enlighten their minds: and today, against the strong opposition of the Church and the Establishment, Scientific Humanism is attempting to do just that.

CHRISTIAN UNITY

THE Convocation of Canterbury, giving much time and thought yesterday to the cause of Christian unity, was not allowed to conduct its deliberations merely at the level of pious hopes or declarations of ecclesiastical intent. The Bishop of Bristol, Dr Oliver Tomkins, saw to that.

The Bishop told the Convocation on the second day of the present group of sessions, that Church unity was "something that could happen in our own lifetime".—*The Guardian* (21/1/65).

The phase in the Roman Catholic Church's ecumenical movement initiated by Pope John, and which his successor had led us to understand he would continue, was instead, closed today by Pope Paul.

In addressing his weekly audience, the Pope warned Catholics that they must not seek to minimise, or erase, controversial dogma which was unacceptable to non-Roman Catholics, "because Christianity is divine truth and is not ours to change, but only ours to ascertain and accept".—*The Guardian* (21/1/65).

Culloden's Field

By F. A. RIDLEY

It is not often that I feel inclined to praise BBC Television, for the most that can fairly be said is that it is usually rather better (and less profit-hungry on account of its governmental status) than is ITV. But I certainly must give it full marks for its recent (December 15th, 1964) splendidly produced documentary on the last battle on British soil—on Culloden Moor.

The battle took place on April 16th, 1746, and resulted in the final rout of the Jacobite army of the young Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart, and in the final ruin of the dynastic cause of the ill-fated Stuarts. As such Culloden must be held to rank as one of the decisive battles in the history, not only of Scotland but of Britain. For it guaranteed the then recent establishment of the Hanoverian dynasty and the Protestant succession, against the restoration of the absolute monarchy of the Catholic Stuarts.

Unfortunately, as appeared with terrifying clarity in the recent documentary, victory was attended by horrifying atrocities on the direct orders of the victorious Hanoverian general, the Duke of Cumberland, younger son of George II; atrocities fully comparable with those perpetrated sixty years earlier (after the last battle on English soil at Sedgemoor in 1685) at the expense of the unfortunate Somerset followers of the Duke of Monmouth.

The Battle of Culloden, as was vividly portrayed on TV, was not actually very severe from a purely military point of view for the odds were by then too obviously unequal. The Hanoverian army was not only nearly double that of the Jacobites (9,000 against 5,000), but had also an overwhelming superiority in every technical respect. One would assume that the battle's chief military importance lay in the fact that it seems to have been perhaps the first example of a modern colonial battle in which an army equipped with modern cannon and fire-arms utilised its technical superiority to "contain" and scientifically annihilate an army of ferociously brave, but primitively equipped barbarians—as the Highland clansmen still were who were out in the '45. "Butcher" Cumberland does not seem to have been a particularly good general for only the previous year (May 1745), he had been badly beaten on the Continent at Fontenay by the famous Polish soldier of fortune, Maurice de Saxe, commanding a French army.

But at Culloden there was too much at stake to take risks. For the Pretender (as the Hanoverians styled the legitimate heir of the Stuarts) had already shown his mettle the previous year, by overrunning Scotland in a few weeks and by invading England, when he got as far as Derby before retreating—a decision which (some historians have seriously held) cost the Stuarts the crown of England. Actually a more recent monarch of the Hanoverian line, the late King George V himself once publicly endorsed this view.

For by the time the Jacobites had reached Derby, London was in a panic; the royal family was packing to flee to Hanover and the Bank of England was paying out in sixpences in order to avoid a financial crash. (Incidentally, the present National Anthem was written during this crisis to stiffen Hanoverian morale, and its original version contains a reference to the advance of the Scottish army*.)

The Scottish Highlanders had demonstrated remarkable fighting qualities. For, in the decline of their fortunes the Stuarts had to eschew the support of the more civilised

parts of their former dominions which had been bribed by growing commercial prosperity to support the Hanoverian *status quo*. Scotland, in particular, had greatly benefited materially from her act of union with England (1707) which had thrown open the English colonies to Scottish trade. By the time the '45 started, the only reliable support available to the Stuarts lay in the poverty-stricken and still semi-barbaric Highlands—by far the most backward economic area in Great Britain. But the poverty-stricken Highlanders had one commodity in abundance—courage! A Highland charge, to the skirl of the bagpipes was often irresistible, even to regular soldiers far better drilled and equipped. Already, before 1745 the clans, and capable leaders like the Marquis of Montrose and "Bonny Dundee" (Claverhouse) had put to flight regular English armies at Killiecrankie (1690) and elsewhere. In 1745, under the inspiring leadership of Bonnie Prince Charlie and his able lieutenant, Lord George Murray (whom the documentary described as one of the most brilliant generals in the 18th century), the Highlanders had already routed two English generals leading armies equipped with far superior professional resources—Sir John Cope at Prestonpans (where one Highland charge won the battle in a quarter of an hour) and General Hanley at Falkirk.

By the time of Culloden, Charles's Highland army, ill-equipped for a prolonged campaign, was at its last gasp. Sheer starvation and lack of ammunition forced Charles (against Murray's advice apparently) to accept battle on the wind-swept moor of Culloden where lack of cover made the clansmen mere decoy ducks for the vastly superior fire-power of the royal armies. Even so, the only time the charging Highlanders could get to close quarters (a thrilling moment on TV) they had the better of it, and broke the first English line of infantry. But long-range firearms eventually decided the issue, as so often on colonial battle fields between armies on different technical levels. The eventual rout of the Jacobites was completed: the Stuarts had met their "Waterloo" and so too had the Highland clans.

Scenes of unbelievable ferocity followed, depicted in often gruesome detail in the documentary. For no quarter was given by Cumberland's express order. However, a few Jacobites managed to get away, including Charles who, after incredible adventures, got back to France, where he lived another forty-two years and eventually drank himself to death on the eve of the French Revolution (1788). His lieutenant, Lord George Murray, the real military genius, it would seem, of the '45 escaped also. Among the humbler survivors of Culloden, was one Burns, who eventually settled in Ayrshire and became the father of Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns, and one of the Macdonalds who had broken the English line at Culloden, who followed his leader to France where his son became one of Napoleon's marshals (Marshal Macdonald, Duke of Tarentum).

Naturally the BBC dealt mainly with the military aspects of Culloden, and did so with both spectacularly dramatic scenic effect and remarkably accurate documentation. But, and altogether apart from its purely military aspect, Culloden was actually a most important battle from every point of view, political, economic and religious. For it finally put paid to the Stuart pretensions, and effectively eliminated Jacobitism as a serious historical force.

(Concluded on page 36)

This Believing World

The filming of the story of Adam and Eve in the £5,000,000 Italian production of the Bible has at last been finished—thought it cost the producers an extra £5,000 to eradicate the vaccination marks off Adam's arm. It was almost as difficult to do this as it was to create Eve from one of Adam's ribs. But Adam had later to have his appendix out, and "the joke went around that they were testing his rib-cage" (*Daily Mirror*, January 11th).

★

Instead of God Almighty himself dealing with the creation of all the ready-made animals, the matter was left to a Swiss animal trainer who did his best not to frighten them. He also looked after them as they entered the Ark in (no doubt) army formation, two by two—lions, tigers, elephants, hippopotami, monkeys, eagles, and of course thousands of birds and insects. All with due reverence and humility. We shudder to think that a lion might forget itself, jump on the back of a giraffe and tear it to pieces. Think of this and similar examples of nature red in tooth and claw being given to us as specimens of the Lord's justice and infinite mercy.

★

In the "Sunday Mirror" (January 10th), Miss Anne Allen wanted to know "how on earth can we imagine that God finds either prayer or praise acceptable unless they spring spontaneously from the heart?" She was discussing "Sit down, stand up, sing a rotten hymn . . ." as a prologue to religious teaching at school, and she asked, "What has this to do with religion?" Of course it has everything to do with religion; it is in fact "corporate worship" which in all state schools, perpetuates Christianity by compulsion.

★

Jewish and Atheist parents can take advantage of the clause allowing them to remove their children from corporate worship, but the children hate this because it makes them feel "different"; it labels them as "odd". Again, some children consider "the hymns are rubbish", and "assembly is all for show". Besides, Miss Allen continues, "praying to order or thanking to rota is boring. And surely it is sacrilege to find God a bore?" But can one avoid finding God, a bore.

★

At last we have found a parson who has discovered that Jehovah's Witnesses was first organised by a Pastor Russell, and known as The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. It was responsible for some very weird interpretations of Holy Scripture. Russell's successor was Judge Rutherford, who went about the country lecturing to huge audiences, assuring them that "millions now living will never die", though unfortunately he himself was not one of the lucky ones.

★

All this is very old stuff but it has just been re-discovered by the Rev. D. Strudwick of Dulwich who has also found that Russell's writings are "largely ignorant nonsense" which is of course quite true. But does Mr. Strudwick himself not write and preach similar nonsense? Is not "true" Christianity with its eternal life, its miracles, its hell and heaven, just as nonsensical as that put out by Pastor Russell and his followers?

The Soul

If the ape can't be saved
From original sin
Then when did the soul
Of man begin?

K.M.

CULLODEN'S FIELD

(Concluded from page 35)

This had far-reaching implications, for a Stuart restoration with French aid would presumably have extended the "Auld Alliance" (between France and Scotland) to England and would have reduced the vigorously developing England of the generation contemporary with *Rule Britannia* (1740) and of the dawn of the Industrial Revolution to the level of a French client-state, as Scotland had been before its union with England. Such a reorientation of English status and alignments would surely have been reactionary at that time of rapid English maritime and industrial expansion.

Similarly, in the religious field, the restoration of the half-French Roman Catholic Stuarts under the protection of a France that still banned Protestantism, would surely have also put back the clock of history. For which fundamental historic reasons (and despite its revolting atrocities and our sympathy for the loyal men scattered—as the song goes—by exile and death for their hopeless loyalty to the Stuart cause) it seems certain that at least the more progressive side won at Culloden.

But surely progress can never have had more unattractive symbols than were the first four Hanoverian Georges, nor the Protestant succession a more unsavoury defender than was "Butcher" Cumberland!

*The original last verse of *God Save the King* ran as follows:

Lord grant that Marshall Wade
May by Thy mighty aid,
Deliverance bring.
May he sedition hush,
And like a torrent rush,
Rebellious Scots to crush,
God save the King.

[Wade was the Hanoverian commander before Cumberland.]

Religious Instruction on Television

"MASTER, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" This question asked by the lawyer which prompted the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke, Ch. 10) is—according to a Middlesex headmaster—"a 20th-century question".

The headmaster was one of several teachers interviewed during the ITV inquiry into religious instruction in school (*This Week*, January 21st). Another, a woman, regarded it as a form of indoctrination which shouldn't happen in an educational establishment, and certainly not in a state school. She had come to feel that RI did "positive harm".

Playwright Harold Pinter, filmed addressing a National Secular Society meeting, considered what should replace RI if it were abolished. He suggested nothing. "If something doesn't do anything for its keep, why mourn its passing?"

The Bishop of London admitted that, in terms of producing Christian members, RI "wasn't doing very well". Why should it be taught at all? he was asked by interviewer Desmond Wilcox. Because, the Bishop answered, this is still "notionally and in a great deal of its tradition", a Christian country.

A boy and a girl (seven or eight years old) were also questioned. Asked what was heaven, the boy replied, "I ain't been up there". And the little girl shyly gave as her reason for believing in God, "because the headmistress says so".

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street.) Sunday Evenings

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square). every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY

INDOOR

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, January 31st, 6.30 p.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM, "Human Nature".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, January 31st, 7.30 p.m.: FRED MCKAY, "Catholicism and Trade Unionism".

North Staffordshire Humanist Group (Cartwright House, Broad Street, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent), Friday, January 29th, 7 p.m.: A Meeting.

Portsmouth Humanist Society (Friends' Meeting House, 25 Northwood Road, Hilsea, Portsmouth), Friday, January 29th, 7.30 p.m.: W. GREAVES, "Method in Thinking".

Richmond and Twickenham Humanist Group (Room 5, Community Centre, Sheen Road), Friday, January 29th, 8 p.m.: DAVID TRIBE, "Is There Brainwashing in Our Schools?"

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, January 31st 11 a.m.: H. L. BEALES, "The Hazards of Affluence".

Tuesday, February 2nd, 7.30 p.m.: ARNOLD MARSH, "Clean Air".

Notes and News

OUR Views and Opinions this week, Margaret Knight's "Christianity: the Debit Account", first appeared in the historical magazine, *Past and Future*, published from 34 Hillgate Place, London, W.8. The article is reprinted by permission of the author and the editor of *Past and Future*, Francis Carr.

★

OXFAM, Elspeth Huxley said recently, "ought to devote all its resources to developing and spreading methods that will slow down this suicidal spawning". It was encouraging to learn, in a letter from Margaret Pyke, that applications on behalf of the work of two overseas family planning agencies are now being considered by Oxfam and that "prospects of a favourable decision appear good" (*Daily Telegraph*, 15/1/65). Mrs. Pyke is the Chairman

of the Steering Committee of the Family Planning International Campaign of 69 Fleet Street, London, E.C.4, which is now enlisting support for the agencies. The International Campaign is headed by a distinguished committee, including Lord McCorquodale of Newton (Chairman), Lord Brain, Viscount Chandos, Richard Crossman, Baroness Gaitskell, Cyril Kleinwort, Dr. P. B. Medawar and Sir Vincent Tewson. Perhaps Archbishop Thomas Roberts should now be asked to join.

★

THERE can certainly be nothing but praise for Archbishop Roberts's insistence that contraception and war are vital and related problems which should be "frankly faced and openly discussed". The purpose of *Objections to Roman Catholicism* (which will be reviewed next week by Margaret McIlroy) and of the Archbishop's contribution to it, was, he said (in the speech read for him at Foyle's literary luncheon at the Dorchester Hotel on January 13th) "to air problems which are of intimate concern to thousands of Catholics and, indeed, to the whole world" (*The Birmingham Post*, 14/1/65). James Mitchell of Constables, the publishers, said at the luncheon that it was "terrible" in the 1960s that there should be any question of a ban—"however nice, however remote, however well thought out—on freedom of speech". And the Chairman, Count Michael de la Bedoyere (Editor of *Objections*) referred to "people in high places who make fools of themselves".

★

THE luncheon, for the Anglican Bishop of Woolwich, provided an occasion for "sitting on the sidelines watching other people being massacred". Evelyn Waugh had declined an invitation to be present saying: "I would gladly attend an *auto da fé* at which your guests would be incinerated, I would not sit down to a meal in their company". But Christopher Hollis rightly remarked that the moves to keep Archbishop Roberts away from the luncheon had given *Objections to Roman Catholicism* a "gigantic advertisement".

★

GOVERNOR WILLIAM SCRANTON of Pennsylvania has complained about the terms being demanded by the YMCA of Harrisburg, for its building which the state is anxious to acquire. The Association is asking for the immediate payment of \$395,000, whereas two private appraisals listed the value of the property at \$281,750, and a third gave it as \$292,400 (*Church and State*, December 1964). Moreover, under the terms of the proposal, the YMCA would continue to occupy the site for nearly two years, rent free, getting interest on the \$395,000, and delaying Capitol extension plans. Small wonder that the Governor should complain!

★

"THE church was sound enough and similar to others that we have built. It was just an act of God." This was the comment of a spokesman for the builders of St. Brendan's Church, Belfast, which collapsed during recent gales. But the spokesman had a rather more rational explanation of the calamity. The trouble started when the winds broke one of the windows, he said. "This caused a high-pressure funnel of air of such force that it blew the roof off" (*Belfast Telegraph*, 14/1/65). And he added the consoling thought that it would "probably be very many years before such high-force gales occur again". For the record, St. Brendan's, now a total wreck, was built two years ago at a cost of £30,000.

Race Relations and the Population Explosion

By CHARLES WILLIAMS MARSHALL

What are the causes of the so called "population explosion"? Can we explain it and if so can we act on it? Conservative traditionalist, freethinker, Catholic and Marxist will all join together and declare that death control has meant that live births are reaching maturity in increasing percentages and thus setting up the upward cycle in population figures. One should perhaps add here that nutritional improvement (where it applies) could be a marginal contributory factor in increased sexual activity, but it is doubtful whether this constitutes even a moderate cause of the population explosion.

Although conservative and radical may accept the same explanation, a growing split is taking place in the grouping composed of freethinkers and Marxists, as to what action should be instituted to deal with this phenomenon. The orthodox Marxist outlook on the world population explosion is that our planet has a potential to feed three or four times the present population (3,300 million approximately in 1964) if only mankind will create the political conditions in which an expansion of agricultural activity can take place. The main political condition demanded is an end to landlordism so that the farmer (peasant) can negotiate his surplus agricultural production freely, thus acquiring the wherewithal to mechanise and otherwise improve his holding and thus set up a chain of improvement. At present it is claimed with some justification that little incentive exists when the landlord takes sometimes 50 per cent (or even more) of the annual crop.

The freethinker should at this stage ask himself two pertinent questions: firstly will the quality of everyone's living be better if the world's population is pushed up to 7,000 million in the year 2000 (current UN estimate); and secondly, although we might have good grounds for believing at present that food production can be pushed up three or four times, are we justified in thinking that this process of per capita expansion can go on indefinitely into the future?

I am no agronomist, so I am not qualified to pass any opinion on the latter question. On the former I would say that I live in England in 1964, and that we now have a population density of some 820 persons to the square mile, which is about four times that of France and five and a half times that of China. In the town of Harlow, where I live, the Development Corporation is building dwelling units at a density of 23 to the acre. This is high by any standard and, in fact, compares very unfavourably with a density of about 10 houses to the acre that was the standard for the housing of African government clerks when I left Sierra Leone in 1955.

We now come to the moral question (with the political overtones accorded it by Catholics, liberals and Marxists) as to whether the white races have any justification in asking the black, brown and yellow races to restrict their populations. A prime piece of religious and political opportunism was put over to a symposium at the International Eucharistic Congress in Bombay recently by Professor Colin Clark the Oxford agricultural economist. He declared that demands for a population limitation in Africa and Asia contained a strong element of racialism (*Daily Worker*, November 28th, 1964).

Professor Clark may have had something here if he had not (purposely?) overlooked the demand which has built up in Britain since the last war that we too (the white races) should also take part in this voluntary restric-

tion of population growth. Britain is already vastly overcrowded and has a terribly precarious economy, especially agriculturally. This writer for one does not believe that the world owes Britain any obligation to feed the 20 million or so of its population that it cannot at present feed itself. On this reckoning need the freethinker, the liberal or the Marxist be embarrassed to face up to the need to propagate this viewpoint and the general question as to whether Britain can take in other countries' surplus populations, be the latter white, black, yellow or brown? Is it not more morally courageous to fight the stultifying conditions of poverty in one's own country than to be a means of affording the genuine racist his opportunities for misrepresentation and hate by emigrating to a country where an even greater potential for economic misfortune already exists? Did not the Russians themselves in the inter-war years turn back potential immigrants at their borders telling them "Go and fight for the revolution in your own country"?

Some people doubt the truth of the old adage that history repeats itself. Let such persons look up the chapter on Irish immigration into Britain in Frederick Engels's *Condition of the Working Class in England* in 1844. Let him compare the lot of the Carribean, Indian and Pakistani immigrant in Britain today with that of the downtrodden and ill-used Irishman of 1844. And let him, after due reflection, consider whether the liberal forces in the world will make any genuine progress if they follow the present opportunistic machinations of political Catholicism and today's bastardised Marxism.

There is a Marxist aphorism: "a problem only arises when the conditions for its solution are already present in society". There exists in the world today a problem of overpopulation in the sense that current output cannot cater for the needs of the population. The rational conditions for the solution of this problem are twofold. Firstly, we must take immediate steps to utilise current biological knowledge to restrict further growth of population whether in East or West or North or South, and secondly we must immediately set about the task through social and agrarian revolution of bringing output up to the levels required for the proper sustenance of the human population of this planet.

It is my contention that both these steps must go together. Freethinkers must be wary of falling into the Catholic trap of equating demographic control with racialism. If we accept this we tie our own hands, and they will remain tied until the ensuing world chaos and suffering brings to power those whose philosophy relegates individual suffering to the glory of the eventual success of their cause.

A TERRIBLE QUESTION

A mother told me recently that when her child was born, she and her husband were informed that he was very very tiny and that his chance of survival was slight.

"My husband and I prayed together," she said, "and as the weeks went by it seemed our prayer had been answered for the child lived."

When he reached four months, they were able to take the baby home but gradually they realised how very mentally retarded he was. "Did we do right to pray?" she asked.

Excerpt from a letter in the *Birmingham Post* (19/1/65).

Points from New Books

WHY do the faithful kiss the Pope's toe? According to Roger Peyrefitte, St. Leo the Great, while on the throne of St. Peter, cut off his own hand to punish it for a carnal gesture provoked by a good-looking woman who had kissed it. However, many of the Popes felt more like shaking hands with themselves when they had successfully demonstrated their virility. Pope Gregory XIII was the first to legitimate his son, although other Popes had heaped their offspring with honours. The son reciprocated the honour and solemnly presented his father with twelve chamber-pots for the papal chamber. So Gregory XIII was shocked when it was reported to him that Prince Vincenzo Gonzaga was impotent. He ordered the Prince to prove his manhood by taking a virgin's maidenhood before witnesses. All partners to this strange ceremony were to be freed from any censure of sin.

This scandal, a true one, is recorded by M. Peyrefitte in *The Prince's Person* (Secker & Warburg, 18s.), and the author's manifest erudition never obscures the wit and happy ribaldry of the story telling. The affair is indeed prodigious. As the author says in his foreword: "The portrayal of the morals of extinct noble families cannot shock us. But it does make us wonder at the destiny of a Church which has weathered such storms." For, of course, it was impossible to keep the scabrous matter secret, and the world whispered about the cardinals and their rapt interest in the prince's private anatomy. And Roger Peyrefitte does not miss a point.

Her life, she said, lost its meaning after Napoleon's death; and it is true that she was capricious and aimless and that, had she not been a Buonaparte, she would not have merited a biography. But Sir Pierson Dixon, as British Ambassador in Paris, lived in the house she loved and where she took her milk baths and washed away the milk odour under a shower of clear water from buckets poured through an aperture in the ceiling by a negro; and so he felt inspired to write *Pauline: Napoleon's Favourite Sister* (Collins, 30s.). Pauline's days of glory were numbered when Napoleon was banished to St. Helena, and she fled to Rome where Napoleon's mother was insisting that angels had wafted the Emperor from his prison to some other country where his health was excellent. The awful thing is that the poor demented woman was encouraged in this belief by Cardinal Fesh, who was so eager to back-up any miracle that he concealed letters received from St. Helena and said their absence proved heaven's intervention! Yet another example of what may happen when one puts one's trust in clerics!

George Bernard Shaw said: "To know nothing is to forgive nothing". Lawrence Langner, author of *G.B.S. And The Lunatic* (Hutchinson, 40s.), reminds us that Shaw made this luminous remark in the stage directions for *Getting Married*. He also reminds us how angry Shaw became in Italy when the Pope forbade women to enter churches in dresses without sleeves and skirts which did not cover their ankles. Shaw argued that any man who attempts to decide that one style of clothing is seductive while another is not must know something about the art of being seductive. Some of the Popes, M. Peyrefitte might have assured Shaw, could have given the playwright a very tart answer! Meanwhile, Mr. Langner's book is a mine of facts about American productions of Shaw.

Amanda Cross has been compared to Michael Innes; and in her detective story, *In The Last Analysis* (Gollancz, 15s.), there are a number of amusing academic Freudian references and a delightful story of a Japanese gentleman and the Trinity. The Japanese scholar says: "Honorable

Father, very good; Honorable Son, very good; but Honorable Bird I do not understand at all".

OSWELL BLAKESTON

The Family Preservation Bill

ON December 4th last the Family Preservation Bill was presented to the House of Commons, read a first time, and ordered to be printed.

It is a short measure, designed, as its sponsor has said, to prevent the dissemination of domestically disruptive doctrines allegedly taught by the Exclusive Brethren, a Christian sect. This body has been severely criticised in the popular press and is reported to have broken up homes and marriages and caused much domestic and social unhappiness by its teachings.

The object of the bill is (as officially stated) to penalise teaching or instruction calculated to encourage the breach of marital obligations or the withdrawal of the love and affection of a parent or guardian from a young child. Fines up to £25 can be awarded for a first offence and £100 for a second.

It is notable that, although the Exclusive Brethren were said to be the target, they are not mentioned in the bill, nor, for that matter, is Christianity as such. The offence is committed when the proscribed teaching is given "solely under the guise of religion". Christians, Roman Catholics and Protestants alike; Jews: and, in fact, all who teach religion of any kind are in danger. But not, curiously enough, an atheist whatever he teaches. The Catholic priest who teaches that the children of a "mixed" marriage not contracted in a Roman Catholic church are bastards; the Christian who promulgates the more anti-social sayings of Christ may well be caught up by the bill. Who would dare to quote Luke 14, 26: "If a man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple". Or Luke 12, 51 *et seq*: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay: but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son and the son against the father: the mother against the daughter and the daughter against the mother: the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." Dangerous New Testament propositions!

This bill is a curious and footling example of heresy-hunting in reverse. The more doctrinaire the teacher the greater his danger. But here Christians are to prosecute rather than persecute their fellow Christians with penalties that are modest and financial. No inquisition, no thumbscrew, no rack, no pillory, no stake, no dungeon. All is skimmed milk and water!

The bill will not, of course, reach the Statute Book. It is so badly conceived, so futile, and its consequences so ill-appreciated, that many Christian members will not support it, indeed, may actually oppose it.

To the Freethinker, however, a debate on the bill, if one takes place, is bound to be amusing and could be hilarious. I say this, even though the conduct of the Exclusive Brethren may be considered anti-social and reprehensible. In this sense they can never emulate, much less excel, the Christians of the past who so bloodily demonstrated man's inhumanity to man.

The second reading of the bill is on February 4th when I, for one, look forward to seeing Christian members, both for and against, skating gingerly on very thin ice. Swift's "Big-endians" and "Little-endians" come to life!

C. FRANKLIN

CORRESPONDENCE

KAUTSKY AND CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

If your recent correspondent, Mr. R. Smith, will take the trouble to read *The Role of the Individual in History* by G. V. Plekhanov (a colleague of Karl Kautsky in the Second International) he will perhaps become able in future to criticise Kautsky—and perhaps even me—more intelligently in these columns.

For as this famous Russian (pre-1917) Marxist adequately demonstrates, Marxism (and Kautsky), do not of course deny *in toto* the influence of the individual in and on the processes of historic evolution. Exceptional men like Calvin or Marx himself, obviously influence world history. All that Marxism insists is that their personal influence is in direct proportion to the degree in which they reflect the latent ideas of their epochs. They represent the articulate voices of their contemporaries.

That this was conspicuously so in the case of early Christianity, has been strikingly confirmed since the publication (in 1908) of Kautsky's classic analysis by the post-war discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, in which prior to the appearance of Christianity as a distinctive cult, we find all its original ideas, the martyred messiah who will return in glory etc., etc. All that Jesus, Paul and company, had to do was to exploit ideas already very much in the air.

In that sense, the Christian cult was the ultimate creation, not of any individual Christ, but of the religious evolution of contemporary Palestine.

F. A. RIDLEY

PS. May I express my appreciation of Dr. Zeitlin's scholarly articles; for no examination of Christian origins can possibly be regarded as adequate which ignores the Jewish traditions themselves, which this eminent scholar summarises so admirably.

F.A.R.

CHRISTIAN CHRISTMAS

I am glad atheists and Christians can agree on at least one point, and that is the celebration of Christmas by those who are not practising Christians. This festival should be abolished for all else, when, I suggest, it would cease to be "outrageous and farcical", for contrary to what Mr. B. Clifton would suggest, there are some people who in all sincerity celebrate the birth of Jesus. I doubt if monopoly capital would fare very well on a truly Christian Christmas.

F. M. NEAL (Miss)

ATHEISTS AND AGNOSTICS

I would like to welcome the statement from Mr. D. L. Humphries (THE FREETHINKER, 15/1/65) that "the two terms are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary or supplementary".

At a recent meeting of the Dundee Humanist Group I addressed young members amongst others under the title "Why you should not believe in God". This meeting proved to be one of the most enthusiastic that we have had and at least two young people joined as a result.

I treated the two terms in question as follows. I said that humanists were fundamentally agnostic, as all reliable democrats must be, in the sense that they willingly admitted that they did not know what life is really all about. However, their own agnosticism at this fundamental level of thinking had the effect of enabling them to say positively that they (the humanists) were sure that nobody who has ever lived could say any different. This included all the popes who had ever lived and all the messiahs and prophets as well!

Having established this fact of being agnostics I then went on to say that the humanists were atheists as well insofar as the published "premiss" of the group in Dundee is that "human problems must be faced in terms of human intellectual and moral resources, without invoking supernatural authority".

I explained that this premiss meant that "we did not accept the Christian nonsense about 'God' or 'the Devil', or angels, or heavenly hosts, or fairies, or ghosts, or spirits, or any of the other things that are brought out to explain certain happenings around us".

I said that humanists were truth-seekers who, like all true scientists, were determined to let no worries about the existence of supernatural beings or influences or forces come between them and the task of understanding the universe in terms of purely natural causes and interactions of natural forces and processes.

I also repeated what I said at the talk I gave to the Glasgow Secular Society in connection with the idea that we had to reject the established theory that the British state was founded on the assumption that the citizens of Britain were expected "to serve God, King and Country". I said that logical humanists

would substitute for these ideas the following alternatives, "Humanity, Democracy and the World".

E. G. MACFARLANE

PEN PAL WANTED

Would any Freethinker be interested in having me for a pen pal? I should love to hear from somebody in London. I am 38 years old.

(Miss) RUTH KRAUSE (New York)
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The Freethinker

Volume LXXXV—No. 6

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Sixpence

In this remarkable book *Objections to Roman Catholicism*, edited by Michael de la Bedoyere (Constable 18s.), practising Roman Catholics—one a Jesuit archbishop, the others laymen and laywomen—voice a series of criticisms of their Church. There is nothing very remarkable about most of what they say, but it is a new development for our own longstanding complaints against the Church to be publicly expressed by people who remain convinced that this Church is an institution of divine origin. As the editor, Michael de la Bedoyere, points out, such a book could not have been published before Pope John's day, and many Catholics, probably a majority, are not happy now at this new freedom of Catholic thought. Many priests, he suggests, despise the intellect of the mass of their flock.

Superstition and Credulity

In "Some Reflexions on Superstition and Credulity" Magdalen Goffin defines superstition as basically "any belief or practice inspired by an unworthy view of God", and credulity as "an uncritical, ill-founded belief in supposed occurrences which are in fact contrary to known truth at any given time. To believe in eternal torment is superstitious; to believe that the holy house in Nazareth flew to Italy with all its furnishings is credulous." The traditional doctrine of hell is regarded as superstition at its worst, presenting God as a hateful monster. She insists that "men can and do lose God by unrepentant rejection of him as he speaks with the voice of conscience", but despite "the dreadfulness of this self-chosen negation and loss" it is a perversion to regard this as "an everlasting state of positive suffering". However hell is still an official part of Catholic doctrine, and "a book published in 1964 with the Southwark imprimatur and intended for Roman Catholic children in grammar schools speaks of the physical fires of hell and the wicked writhing in envy and remorse for all eternity."

Sacraments and Spells

A number of widely-criticised Catholic doctrines Mrs. Goffin considers not superstitious or credulous in themselves, but the idea many Catholics have of them she does believe to be superstitious. The supposition of purgatory, an intermediate state between heaven and hell, she thinks reasonable enough, but not so the elaborate system of remittances and indulgences purporting to obtain the release of souls from it. Sacrament may be an "efficacious means of intensifying God's life in the soul", but "Rome in her general teaching and practice, has often so degraded the sacraments that they are regarded as something in the nature of spells." Similarly the cults of the Virgin and the saints, while reasonable enough in themselves, have been misunderstood, naturally, by simple people. Her complaint is that the crude superstitions inevitable among peasants have been officially fostered. "Catholics in school and parish are encouraged to believe not only facts which most certainly have not been revealed, but many which are clean contrary to what their secular knowledge tells them to be

true. This deliberate fostering of credulity takes many forms and is to be found in the highest places."

Mrs. Goffin concludes that "the stupidities, the absurdities of the Roman Catholic Church are there for all to see," but the person who sees them may be "deluded into believing something far more deeply absurd, false and silly," be "guilty of a negative credulity . . . thinking that the only things which can be true are those which are capable of empirical proof."

That is, she is concerned lest the shortcomings of the Church should encourage the spread of atheism.

Mrs. Goffin's essay has been criticised particularly severely by Catholic spokesmen, who say that she is no theologian. This is doubt-

less true, but she goes more directly to the heart of the argument for that. She starts from the orthodox assumption that God is good, and therefore she concludes that he does not commit acts repulsive to her—and our—moral sense. If the tradition of the Church says that God eternally tortures people for his greater glory, then the Church is wrong. This may not be theology, but it is something a great deal more decent and wholesome than most theology.

Feudal Face

John M. Todd, in "The Wordly Church—Political Bias, Autocracy and Legalism", makes a devastating attack on the historical record of the Church. It has, he says, become a centralised system of power, allied to the secular power, which it has supported in unjust wars and used as an instrument to kill heretics. "The Church has institutionalised the gospel" and "has a feudal face because most of her traditions developed in a feudal society."

However, Mr. Todd insists that the Church is changing in the direction of democracy, with a better status for Catholic laymen, and the gradual abandonment of the use of the state to enforce conformity. He insists that there has always been another side to the Church, typified by St. Francis—a spirit of love and service. He admits that "many Catholics have been guilty of terrible evil", but he considers "that the balance of achievement, holy, human and valuable, outweighs the bad". He realises that critics may well think that the Church's apparent change of heart would not last if it again found itself strong enough to enforce its dictates, but he seems confident that the good in it will prevail.

Authoritarian

Frank Roberts, who is a lecturer in education and psychology, writes on "Authoritarianism, Conformity and Guilt". He admits that the non-Catholic may find alien "the authoritarian power which the Church exercises over its members" and its "emphasis upon orthodoxy . . . To the outsider, many Catholics would appear to be pre-occupied with keeping the letter of the law rather than the spirit . . . Many will ask what part the Church played in initiating" important social reforms such as the abolition of slavery and child labour.

"How," Mr. Roberts asks, "can we account for this

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

"Objections to Roman Catholicism"

By MARGARET McILROY

conventionalism and legalism in religious observance?" He looks for the answer in child psychology. The child of about six years has an idea of morality based on the strict keeping on rules imposed from above, and thinks in terms of severe retributive punishment. But at the age of about seven "children are prepared for their first Communion, are, being now at the 'age of reason', considered fit to begin to live by the Sacraments." Thus their religious attitudes may be finally formed at an age when religion can only be seen in terms of rigid regulations and cruel punishments. Mr. Roberts thinks that children should not be faced with responsibility for their religious lives before they are eleven. "Children are very ready to adopt adults' moral injunctions while still very young, thus conditioning themselves to harsh judgments of each other and themselves. They are easily made to feel guilty and anxious."

Mr. Roberts thinks Catholic teachers tend to be authoritarian, and suspects that there is more corporal punishment in Catholic schools than in others. He says that a morbid sense of guilt may induce young people to become priests and nuns when they have no real vocation, and cannot find fulfilment in the religious life. This is, I think, the reason why so many priests and nuns have harsh, disagreeable attitudes to those under them.

Mr. Roberts's conclusion is that "a wider place must be found in society for the active Catholic layman"—a place which the layman will have to make for himself, despite the opposition at times of "his own clergy".

The Index

Professor H. P. R. Finberg tells, with distaste, the story of censorship by the Church. A Catholic may not publish a book on any subject connected with faith or morals without a bishop's licence, but even with this licence the book may later be condemned by the Holy Office, without any reason being given, and without the author having any opportunity to defend his work. He writes with humorous bitterness about the Index of Prohibited Books. The deliberate reading of any of these books without permission is punishable by excommunication—the most severe penalty the Church can inflict. The Index contains many of the masterpieces of world literature, including all the novels of Balzac and romances guilty merely of occasional naughtiness. Other books have been placed on the Index because they told inconvenient truths about Church history. However, he considers that the Index will be allowed to die a natural death. He condemns the general attitude of the Church to controversy, and concludes by praising Pope John for "his total assurance that confronting the modern world the Church needs no other armoury than that of her abiding truth."

Coercion through Fear

A particularly frank essay is the one by Mrs. Rosemary Haughton, "Freedom and the Individual". She describes the enemy view of the Church: "The belief that the Catholic church is the enemy of freedom has become the first article of the anti-Catholic creed. At a time when free discussion and liberty of conscience were not greatly encouraged by other Christian bodies either, the immorality of the Scarlet Woman was the number one accusation. Non-Catholics believe Catholics are not allowed to think for themselves." "The really awful thing," says Mrs. Haughton, "is not the fact that people think like that. It is that the Catholic church should present to the world . . . an image of herself which allows or even obliges honest and intelligent people" to think on these lines. "But perhaps still worse is the fact that vast numbers of Catholics are not only content to accept as true an image substantially similar though more attractively dressed, but even exult in it." Pius IX declaring in his Syllabus of

Errors that there could be no compromise with "progress, liberalism and modern civilisation" seems to give the final proof of the essentially anti-democratic nature of the Church. Though she seems now to have "suffered a change of heart," her opponents can say that "her past misdeeds show her real nature" and she is merely "biding her time until she is in a position to assert her power once more."

However, Mrs. Haughton asks us to consider not the historical record of the Church, but "whether true personal freedom is the essence of Catholicism as properly understood." (One can only comment that if freedom is indeed the essence of Catholicism the truth about their religion has been unrecognised by almost all its popes.) Mrs. Haughton insists that freedom must involve the right to do wrong and learn by mistakes. The authority of the Church is useful as a guide to self-knowledge—to say, "this is what you are; this what you are for". However, if the Church uses a political type authority to coerce through fear, it takes away "the freedom to respond to God's love by complete self-giving."

While the Church was busy insisting on its authority, "all the great movements of human progress had begun and continued not only outside the area of the Church's influence, but usually in the teeth of her frantic opposition." Although finally the Church has seen herself as others see her, there is still danger of a relapse, for many in positions of authority have no interest in freedom for the laity. "Physical force is 'out' (except apparently in Sicily and Malta) but emotional and moral blackmail is very much 'in' . . . The Monday morning questioning of schoolchildren about Sunday Mass attendance goes on: the cunning learn to lie, and the brave to associate defiance of the Church with freedom and self-respect. As they grow up the children learn to see passive obedience as the hallmark of a good Catholic . . . But those parents who would prefer to take their children away from such influences are branded as traitors . . . Threats of Hell are far from uncommon, and Purgatory is presented by kindly teachers and preachers in terms that make it appear that there isn't much to choose between the two."

Nevertheless, Mrs. Haughton's conclusion is that "the future is full of hope, but only if the past and the present are fully understood."

Contraception and War

The last essay is "Question to the Vatican Council—Contraception and War" by Archbishop T. D. Roberts, SJ—the only priest to contribute to this book. Having worked in India, he is well aware of the seriousness of the population problem there—"a problem that cannot but stun the Western mind by its complexity and its tragic character." Perhaps it is his Indian experiences that have made him think so seriously about contraception, and express opinions so different from those one would expect from a Jesuit and an archbishop. He does not directly reject the Church's attitude, for he accepts its authority, but he says, "If I were not a Catholic, I would probably be compelled on the grounds of reason alone to accept the position taken by the Lambeth Conference. . . How one could deny that conclusion on purely rational grounds—and it is on rational grounds that Catholic theologians base their case against contraception—has never been clear to me . . . It does not do much good to argue on grounds of a natural law that only Catholics are able to recognise as natural: a natural law ought to be a law natural to every being endowed with human nature."

Following Pope John, Archbishop Roberts says that an atomic war could hardly conceivably be just. Though it

(Continued on page 46)

A Disciple of Gandhi

By F. A. RIDLEY

THE publisher's introductory notice prefixed to the English translation of *Right Thought* by Vidya Anand (Golden Eagle Publishers of Austria, where it was originally published in German) describes it as "a detailed study of the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and the way his ardent disciple, Acharyd Vinoba Bhave, is trying to give practical expression to his cherished dreams".

The Indian author is a disciple of Gandhi and protegee of that great humanist statesman, the late Pandit Nehru. Mr. Anand (whom I had the pleasure of meeting recently and who is now engaged upon a book describing the interaction of German and Indian culture) evidently regards his philosophy as "an article of export". For he recently introduced what is, I believe, an entirely new technique into English Trade Union disputes. In March 1963, he began "a fast unto death" in order to compel the directors of a Pakistan bank in London to grant a substantial pay increase to their employees on strike. This novel form of intervention was entirely successful, for the bank authorities capitulated at once and granted all their employees' outstanding demands. We do not yet know whether this originally Oriental technique of fasting unto death (practised by Gandhi himself with conspicuous success in the course of India's own political struggle for independence) will now become a regular and recognised feature of future industrial disputes in Britain—it is difficult to imagine some of the more prosperous-looking present Trade Union leaders resorting to so drastic a remedy!

Mr. Anand commences his instructive book by a brief, but illuminating (and in part extremely grim) critique of British rule in India. British imperialism, "impelled by a lust for loot" unequalled since the Spanish Conquest of the Americas (according to a quotation from an English source) completely ruined India's traditional economy based primarily upon weaving and domestic handicrafts. Consequently, whilst India had represented a relatively prosperous trading community prior to its conquest by the East India Company in the 18th century, by 1947 when, after a prolonged political struggle, it at last obtained national independence, India had been reduced to the status of a backward agrarian nation, perhaps the most poverty-stricken in the world. It was, and still is, this dolorous economic situation that Gandhi and his present-day disciples had, and still have, to solve. It is perhaps relevant at this point, to remind readers of THE FREE THINKER that Charles Bradlaugh ranks amongst the effective pioneers of Indian independence. Known in his own day as "the member for India", Bradlaugh was the first leading MP to address the Indian National Congress in 1890.

As Mr. Anand reveals in a most interesting and informative manner, Gandhi and his surviving followers (of whom Vinoba Bhave, the hero of this book is the chief) attempted their solution of India's fundamental problem, the problem of mass-poverty, of actual destitution by current European standards, in an unusual and original manner. For, instead of advocating a rapid extension of the industrial revolution and of industrial techniques, Gandhi in the last generation, and Vinoba Bhave in this one, pin their hopes upon a revival of the traditional handicraft industry based on the domestic spinning wheel of India (ruthlessly eliminated by the East India Company in the interests of British mechanised industry) and upon a peaceful agrarian revolution aimed ultimately at the effective redistribution of the land

and at the restoration of the traditional Indian system of peasant holdings.

It may be added that whilst this (as it may be termed) anti-industrial revolution undoubtedly ran counter to the main contemporary economic trends, it is not entirely confined to India or unknown in the West. For Tolstoy in Russia and such English Victorian radical reformers as John Ruskin and William Morris advocated a very similar form of social revolution. In his *News from Nowhere* and *The Dream of John Bull*, Morris has given us idyllic pictures of such future Arcadian societies in which modern industry, with all its attendant drabness and squalour, is no more; and in which a free peasantry based on local tillage and handicrafts, have restored "merrie England". Though expressed in more familiar terminology, such an imagined social order appears to be essentially similar to the actual social order that Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave have actually tried to establish in contemporary post-British India.

The philosophy that animates the book is essentially that of Mahatma Gandhi, whose spiritual presence is evident on every page of *Right Thought*. But its actual hero is Gandhi's nowadays best-known disciple, Acharyd Vinoba Bhave, and most of the narrative is devoted to describing the campaign for the voluntary redistribution of the land which he and his disciples have been carrying on all over India since the early years of independence after 1947. As a result of this non-stop campaign vividly described in Anand's pages, literally millions of acres have been handed over to Vinoba Bhave for redistribution to India's vast landless agrarian proletariat, which figured so largely in "the good old days" of Victorian England and of contemporary lands. As Anand emphasises, Vinoba's campaign is based throughout on an appeal to India's traditional communal ethic which, or so the author claims, can be traced back to the days and teaching of Buddha.

However, Vinoba's bloodless agrarian revolution has received universal support from the most varied political sources; India's first President donated all his own land in Delhi and Prime Minister Nehru gave the campaign his official blessing. Both the governing Congress Party and the principal opposition Socialist Party pledged support in official party resolutions; whilst even the Communist Party, whilst entering an orthodox Marxist caveat upon the ultimate success of all such schemes of voluntary revolutions carried out by individuals and not by classes, yet declared that they "were not opposed in principle" to Vinoba's agrarian redistribution; and the Communist Prime Minister of the State of Kerala, officially welcomed Vinoba to his province. More recently, Vinoba has added a subscribers' trust for the voluntary redistribution of capital and personal wealth as well as land. This voluntary revolution is to be extended to all spheres of contemporary Indian society.

Clearly, the movement outlined above constitutes a striking exception to the general trends of modern social and economic evolution, so much so that orthodox (Western) sociology would probably discount its ultimate chances of solving the terrible social and economic problems. Be that as it may, the remarkable originality, buttressed so far by such spectacular results, of India's bloodless agrarian revolution make it a movement of unusual interest and importance. And Mr. Anand's monograph is marked equally by subjective enthusiasm for and objective knowledge of its absorbing theme.

This Believing World

In a series entitled "Why I Believe", BBC TV presented again the other evening a Ceylonese Christian missionary, the Rev. Dr. D. T. Niles, whose sturdy belief seemed to stagger even his interviewer, the Rev. Ian Pitt-Watson. After all, there's a limit even to the credulity of Christians. But not apparently in the case of Dr. Niles. He was utterly devoted to Jesus, and was rather contemptuous of Western Christianity, because its followers obviously did not share his own complete faith. We wonder whether the BBC religious director really believes that the twaddle that poured out from Dr. Niles would bring any erring straggler back into the fold.

★

The "Kentish Mercury" (January 1st) had an article on "A Vague Feeling that Baptism is a Social Necessity". Well, if baptism means a little washing, we can agree that it is necessary. One shudders to think of the sanitation—or lack of it—in the East centuries ago. Even now it's bad enough. Lots of early Christian converts never washed at all, and Jesus was entirely with them (Matt. 15, 20). Of course in those days baptism did not mean washing for cleanliness but "spiritual" washing. You "washed away" your sins. Which in plain language, is rubbish.

★

The best way to make money, if you are lucky, is to win on the pools, or with Premium Bonds, or on the horses. But there are other ways—and one of them is described in *The People* (January 17th). You can make money quite easily, says the Rev. B. Williams. All you have to do is to let him have yours when he visits your town for Jesus's sake—and through his honest-to-goodness evangelism, and because of his divine message, if you entrust him with some of your wealth God will miraculously multiply it "perhaps as much as 40 times".

★

The one great requisite is that it must be you who pays Mr. Williams first, and then God himself will do the rest. Only then can "God make you a millionaire". In fact, Mr. Williams himself has in this way been able to go all over the world without it costing him a penny piece. It all goes to show what faith in Jesus can do with other people's money. And if one doesn't become a millionaire, it simply proves how weak his faith is.

★

It has often been pointed out here, that while hundreds of nobodies can be summoned from the mighty deep by any medium, Spiritualists never seem able to contact murderers or their victims. In fact, in England there has never been a single case of this sort which has helped the police. On the other hand, mediums are in great demand by police in other countries, according to article after article in our weeklies. But no names, no packdrill, is the motto favoured by all mediums.

★

Every now and then however, the truth is revealed—many years later. For example, a "well known" medium, Mrs. Roberts is the heroine of a story by Mr. R. Egan in *Weekend* (January 20th, 1965). It appears that in 1937 a poor child who had been murdered, "came" to Mrs. Roberts in "a vision" and told her where to find the body. It was not until the medium personally investigated the spot that it was found—a story for which the only evidence was Mrs. Roberts's own. The implication was that the medium helped the police, though this was not actually said by Mr. Egan. Of course, those who wish, can believe the story related 28 years after the event, for which the only evidence is what a Spiritualist medium says.

It must be heartbreaking for a thoroughly Christian journal like the London *Evening News* to report that some clergy are boycotting a unity service (January 16th). These parsons claim that the services which took place in Rochester Cathedral and other churches "blurred over the vast differences between the Roman church and Protestant churches". Of course—but is it not rather late in the day to find this out? The main difference is that Roman Catholics insist that their Church is the one founded on a rock by Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, and in fact God himself, and that all other Churches are heretical. And no unity is possible until all heretical Churches give in and humbly acknowledge their dreadful sin. In the meantime, the Roman Church is cock of the walk.

The Perfectionist

"I EXPECT it was a man like my daddy who crucified that carpenter you talk about," the child said.

The nurse flushed.

"Well," the child conceded, "perhaps daddy had some nasty men to help him."

"You mustn't say things like that," the nurse protested. "God might hear you."

"How far away is heaven?" the child sneered. "He couldn't hear that carpenter on the cross, could He? What's the use of a god like that? He's asleep."

"Doesn't He deserve to rest after all He's done for us?" the nurse demanded. "He made this world, didn't He? and everything He made is perfect. Don't you know that?"

"What about me?" the child countered furiously, "what about daddy? We're both hunchbacks, aren't we?"

"Why," said the nurse, "you're the most perfect little hunchback I ever saw."

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ADVT.

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Labelled life: "nasty, brutish and short":
He'd have felt fewer ills, with just one of our pills—
(See our company MO's report).

A.E.C.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street,) Sunday Evenings

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, February 7th, 6.45 p.m.: P. D. MORGAN, "The Policeman and the Citizen".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, February 7th, 6.30 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY, "The New Testament Reconsidered".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, February 7th, 7.30 p.m.: PETER FRYER, "Charles Knowlton and the English Birth Rate".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, February 7th, 11 a.m.: Dr. JOHN LEWIS, "Morality without Religion".

Tuesday, 7.30 p.m.: Dr. LAURENCE KOTLAS, "Does Religious Propaganda in the Schools Matter?"

Notes and News

THIS week we are devoting a good deal of space to Margaret McIlroy's review of *Objections to Roman Catholicism*. The space is justified by the importance of the subject: a searching criticism of the Church by several lay Catholics and the now notorious Archbishop Roberts.

★

We are inclined to agree with Lena Jeger (*The Guardian*, 26/1/65) that it was inappropriate to honour "the greatest parliamentarian of our time" by closing down Parliament. Fitting, no doubt, to leave after the tributes on January 25th, but why not—to use Churchill's own coined phrase—"business as usual" the following morning? Part of the answer may lie, as Mrs. Jeger suggested, in a "national willingness to look back rather than look forward . . ."

★

On January 24th, for the second time in a week, Pope Paul issued a warning about hopes for Christian unity. The tone of his remarks, the *Guardian* reported (25/1/65) brought out clearly "the sharp difference between his views on the matter and those of the late Pope John". At his Sunday appearance at his study window over St. Peter's Square, Pope Paul warned against "evolving towards a

fragile and ambiguous unity not based on Christ"—another "indirect emphasis", the *Guardian* said, on the special position of the Roman Catholic church.

★

DR. J. G. BOURNE, a senior anaesthetist of St. Thomas's Hospital and Salisbury Hospital Group, has taken up a suggestion made by Dr. C. C. Clark (in the *New York Medical Record*) in 1908, that Jesus might not have died on the cross, but only fainted. Dr. Bourne has investigated more than 100 fainting cases in dentistry and has recorded that "they appeared as a series of events remarkably like the Crucifixion and Resurrection" (*The Sunday Times*, 24/1/65). Apart from the likeness of fainting to death, death is not always easily diagnosed and, as Dr. Bourne pointed out, mistakes are made even today. What, then, he asked, "could be more understandable than a mistake during the tumult of this terrible event?" According to Renan, recovery after crucifixion was known to the ancients. Dr. Bourne's theory removes the supernatural element from the story, of course, and makes a mockery of Easter Sunday (imagine the Pope celebrating Christ's resurrection from a faint!) but this isn't considered a serious deficiency. Jesus's life was "sublime without physical myths", and nothing Dr. Bourne said, "can take away the miracles of the spirit". Whatever they may be!

★

ANOTHER *Sunday Times* writer on Jesus, the Rev. Dr. Leslie Weatherhead, believed that the Gospel writers "distorted the message of Jesus". But this, as Margaret Knight showed in a letter to the paper (24/1/65), is a slippery slope. "If the Gospel writers were capable of distorting the fact, deliberately or otherwise, there can be little ground," Mrs. Knight wrote, "for accepting any of their more intrinsically improbable statements—as that Jesus rose from the dead." If the Gospels are not authentic, the whole basis of Christianity collapses. That they simply cannot be accepted as authentic was clearly demonstrated by a letter from J. P. Davidson of Glasgow to the *Daily Telegraph* (23/1/65). Mr. Davidson noted the contradictory and irrelevant genealogies of Jesus through Joseph, and described the birth stories as a cycle of legends. The Gospels were, in fact, "anonymous documents" and nothing was known "as fact" about their authors. What may be "good theology" or even "taught as Church doctrine" cannot, Mr. Davidson said, "be stated or written as historic fact."

★

THE Parent Royal Commission on education in Quebec recommended that teachers with insufficient conviction should be excused from teaching religion. And the *Montreal Star* agreed (16/1/65). Lack of conviction soon becomes evident to young minds, it said, however conscientious a teacher may be. "No school authority would argue that a teacher with insufficient grounding in science . . . should be required to teach science, even though, unfortunately, this is sometimes the case." And the same applied to religion. But the *Star* added, "the degree of a teacher's orthodoxy should have nothing to do with the evaluation his supervisors make of him as a teacher or potential principal". And yet this, too, was "often the case".

★

OUR frequent contributor, Oswald Blakeston, will be exhibiting collage paintings at Fontainebleau, 3 Northumberland Avenue, London, W.C.2, from February 15th to March 13th, weekdays, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. February 15th will also be the publication date of Mr. Blakeston's *Fingers* (Gaber-bocchus, 6s.), described as "unclassifiable fiction with illustrations".

Objections to Roman Catholicism

(Continued from page 42)

is not practicable at present to abolish all atomic weapons, he believes that the rights of conscientious objection should be fully recognised, so that no one should be forced to take part in an unjust war. He comments that Catholic countries, with their emphasis on obedience to civil authority, have been reluctant to recognise the rights of conscience. He admits that "the factual evidence seems overwhelming that German Catholics generally . . . supported the Hitler war effort."

It has been clear for several years that the Roman Catholic Church was changing at a speed which previously would have seemed incredible. The publication of this book shows how far the process has gone, and how difficult it would now be for the Vatican to turn it back. The writers themselves seem fairly confident that there will be no return to the bad old days. The criticisms now being made by Catholic writers are often the very ones that we have always made of the Church, though most of these authors seem to try to avoid direct statements, preferring to say "it seems" rather than "it is". This does not apply to Mrs. Goffin, who so firmly rejects the historical teaching of the Church on hell. The moral disgust with which she regards that doctrine is exactly that felt by generations of freethinkers. Other writers show up the Church as the traditional enemy of freedom and the ally of unjust governments. We have Catholic schools condemned for teaching passive conformity, and the admission that some Catholics do not wish to send their children to them but are under pressure to do so. Archbishop Roberts shows the Church's attitude to contraception to be illogical and socially harmful—using many of the arguments traditionally used by ourselves. Even two raise the basic question of whether the Church's present move towards democracy within her own ranks and toleration outside them is merely a facade covering an intention to return to her old ways should she regain the power to impose her will.

Why Stay In?

A question we must ask—and many old-fashioned Catholics are certainly asking it angrily too—is why people who have such fundamental criticisms of the Church remain inside it. (It is noteworthy that they are allowed to, and have apparently not been called to account for their outspokenness.) Catholic spokesmen have often claimed that the historical record of the Church is the proof of its divine origin and inspiration, and that any honest person looking fairly at its achievement would be convinced. Freethinkers on the other hand have seen in the Church's history a record of bloodshed, intolerance, obscurantism, superstition and mental cruelty, which, even aside from the general implausibility of its dogmas, effectively, to us, disproves its claims. Broadly it is the argument from history that these writers are conceding. They admit that the historical record of the Church is not good; it is marked by feudalism; it has accepted the values of authoritarian class societies; it has opposed humanitarian reforms; it has enslaved men's minds. When these people look at the Church they see all the things we see. They have all this common ground with us, yet they choose to remain within an organisation which we detest and see as a main obstacle to human happiness. They must indeed love their Church to wish to be in it, knowing what we and they know. Of course we, as outsiders to whom the Church seems alien and incomprehensible as well as wrong and dangerous, can never see it as it appears to a Catholic

who is accustomed to regard it with love and reverence, however clearly he may come to recognise its crimes.

The Catholic who, then, remains loyal is usually the one who has for his Church the deep love based on happy childhood memories—an emotion more powerful than reason. The Catholic whose religion is based on fear leaves the Church in relief and disgust if he once ceases to be convinced of its divine authority to regulate his life. It is very noticeable that ex-Catholics usually detest their former Church, while people who have been brought up as liberal Protestants if they abandon their religion as intellectually untenable do so with at least a vague regret. There is a fundamental difference between those Christians whose religion is based on the idea of a loving God, and those whose main concern seems to be to propitiate a vengeful monster. Catholics are in a difficult position here, as the God of their dogma combines both aspects in a particularly confusing mixture, but they have tended to emphasise—frequently with expressions of sadistic glee—the doctrine of hell fire, and in their schools the prevalence of corporal punishment has pointed the same lesson. Now, belatedly, the Church is being influenced by more enlightened, modern attitudes to children. Little Catholics frequently learn religion in the context of a happy childhood. These will be the Catholics who, like Mrs. Goffin, see the doctrine of hell as incompatible with, and irrelevant to the religion of their childhood. They will also be the Catholics who are likely to remain loyal to their Church, however much they may see in it to criticise.

Concerning hell, the traditional Catholics are in a dilemma. Most of them now are sufficiently enlightened and sufficiently aware of the dangers to mental health to be wary of teaching this dogma to little children. But the doctrine is so repulsive to the modern mind that only a person who has been accustomed to it from babyhood can accept it without revulsion. Therefore the teaching on hell is certain to be fundamentally modified—and has already been in one direction, as it is not now held to be the inevitable destination of non-Catholic Christians, Muslims and Jews.

The Future

What will be the future of the Church?—we naturally wonder. Is it possible that the reactionaries will win in the end, and the Church become again the completely authoritarian society it once was? I do not think so, just as I do not think Communist countries are likely to revert to Stalinism. Given peace, the logic of the twentieth century leads to democratic and educational advance. There are clearly far too many Catholics thinking along the same lines as the authors of this book for the movement to be easily stifled. The recent affair of Archbishop Roberts and the Foyle's luncheon is highly significant. At the request of influential Jesuits, he did not attend the luncheon held in connection with this book—he only sent along his speech to be read there. What a victory for reaction! They prevented Roberts from attending the luncheon, with the result that his support for it was far more widely publicised than it would otherwise have been, and the Jesuit Superiors were left looking foolish in the background. As an archbishop, Roberts is in a particularly good position to express his views, since he is responsible only to the Pope. It has been suggested that the extent of radicalism among the younger clergy is frequently underestimated because so many young priests are under a

discipline which prevents them from saying what they think. In the course of time, when the higher positions in the Church come to be held by men of this century, we may find that the change has gone deeper than we knew.

It would be a great mistake to see the reforming movement in the Church as merely a cynical attempt to make concessions in order to hang on to power. Here are Catholics shocked at the contradictions within their own organisation, who are citizens of democratic states, and are insisting that the democratic values they have learned outside the Church should be accepted inside it. They will have a long way to go, because the Church is an international organisation with the bulk of its membership in backward countries where democracy is not a generally accepted ideal, but in the advanced countries I think we can safely say the Catholic Church will never look the same again, nor would the laity easily agree to slip back into their old insignificance. In the last sixty years, Protestantism has changed out of all recognition, and, in England at least, it spends most of its energy recommending generally accepted social virtues and doing welfare work, instead of frightening people into fits with hell-fire sermons, and exhorting the poor to be satisfied with the station in life to which it had pleased God to call them. The Catholic Church too, I believe, will move with—though inevitably behind—the times, despite its cumbersome monolithic structure, and its pretence that it never changes. But the Catholics who have taken upon themselves the work of getting it moving have set their shoulders to a tremendous job. Let us appreciate their decency and courage, and wish them luck. They need it.

Victor Purcell—A Tribute

By F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

It was a terrible shock to learn of the death of Dr. Victor Purcell on the second day of the New Year. He was only 69 years of age and was still at work, striving in the causes of humanism and rationalism as well as making distinguished contributions to Oriental studies. His loss is irreparable in many spheres, both to those who care for fine scholarship and to those who admire its application over wider, rationalistic fields. Indeed, the mordant satire of Myra Buttle had reached the eyes of many to whom his authoritative works upon Chinese history were quite unknown. Purcell was a man who had played many parts in his life and illuminated them all. A whole world of scholarship and affairs is the poorer for his passing.

A distinguished career at Cambridge had equipped Purcell as a potential historian. He was trained in a university where history had come to be defined by such master-minds as Acton, Bury and Coulton and his studies had developed in him a Gibbonian approach to life. He was in every sense a great son of the Enlightenment of which Gibbon was a father. A vast learning and a width of vision were allied to the scepticism and cynicism which gave him realism and balance. He was of a distinguished heritage in the service of history. Names such as Lecky or, more recently, J. M. Thompson spring to mind as great historians in whom the salt of scepticism found its savour. Purcell was of this succession and his background equipped him to the full for every task which he undertook.

Entering upon a career in the government service, Purcell spent many years in the Far East as a civil servant. It was these years which gave him a firsthand acquaintance with Orientalism and made him a student of the ancient civilisations at their sources. His later writings show a discernment which arose from this exact and immediate

knowledge just as his work generally was to profit by the qualities of practical administration which Purcell then learned and developed.

Returning to England, Purcell settled in Cambridge where he became a fellow of Trinity College and the University lecturer in Chinese History. It would be a mere impertinence for anybody but an Oriental specialist to criticise the long series of distinguished books which he published in his chosen field. His early historical training asserted itself and was applied to many of the problems which arose out of the history of China. Indeed, one of his more recent works will take its place as authoritative in probing the wider causes and their specific outcome which were destined to burst forth in the Boxer Rising. Exact historical knowledge allied with practical insight made him an authority on the part played by the Eastern religions in the evolution of social history in Asia. At Cambridge, Dr. Victor Purcell will long be remembered as a distinguished Orientalist who added much to the knowledge of his subject.

Faced with his direct knowledge of the eastern religions, Purcell was quick to see their implications for the rationalist. Those who attended the Rationalist Press Association Conference at Oxford in 1960 will recall with gratitude his learned paper enlightening these topics. Living and working in Cambridge, Purcell soon came to assess the contemporary pressure of established religious beliefs within the university. He wrote the Myra Buttle satires as a telling answer to such sophistry as that of C. S. Lewis, a fashionable theological figure of a decade ago. But he also became a leading Cambridge humanist whose name was feared and disliked by local clergy and religious protagonists. Purcell loved a fight and delighted in an argument. His pugnacity led him into many a battle on behalf of a humanistic rationalism whilst his heart warmed towards the secularist viewpoint. But his combative spirit was called forth by both the motives and the tactics of the ecclesiastics. Purcell was a rationalist of the best type, learned and certain where he stood when faced by Christian claims. In many ways, when dealing with such issues, he was a credit to his great master, Edward Gibbon. It is indeed to be hoped that Victor Purcell may continue to provide an example for the humanist and freethought movements which he served with courage and singleness of purpose during his lifetime. He could hit and hit hard but it was always in the sincere interest of the movement which he was serving and with a striking disregard for his own special comfort within his college and university. His loss is one which can ill be spared today and which can only be overcome by carrying on his work.

EXECUTIVE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Secular Society was held at 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1, on Wednesday, January 20th. Present: Mr. D. Tribe who was in the Chair; Messrs. Barker, Collins, Condon, Hornibrook, Kuebart, Millar, Miller, Sproule, Timmins, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. McIlroy, Mrs. Venton, the Treasurer Mr. Griffiths, and the Secretary Mr. McIlroy.

Plans for future activities in connection with the campaign against religion in the school were discussed. It was agreed that the Minister of Education should be asked to receive a deputation.

A Working Committee was formed to arrange events during Centenary Year 1966, and the International Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers. Messrs. F. H. Amphlett Micklewright and D. Tribe were elected delegates to the Annual General Meeting of the National Council for Civil Liberties.

The next meeting was arranged for February 17th, 1964.

CORRESPONDENCE

APPEAL TO TEACHERS

Could I appeal through your columns to teachers who have had first-hand experience of the problems of being non-conformist, agnostic or atheist in their professional lives?

The magazine of which I am editor is running a series of articles on the practical problems of such teachers, and the extent to which they have been conscious of prejudice or discrimination against themselves.

BARRY RUSSELL, Editor,

New Venture, Birmingham University, Federation of Teachers Training Colleges Student Unions' Magazine.

A DELICATE TOPIC

I am becoming increasingly convinced that one of the greatest impediments to the Freethought movement is the unwillingness among people to discuss religion or the Church unless they are professionally concerned. The subject is avoided at all costs by otherwise intelligent conversationalists, who seem to be under the impression it is "wise" to avoid such a delicate topic.

This is surely where the strength of present-day religion lies. By regarding it as a great and mysterious thing only to be mentioned with humility, instead of discussing it with the frankness one discusses the brain-drain or juvenile delinquency, religion has been allowed to establish itself side by side with radar and rocketships, and is accepted by complaisant agnostics as part of the modern world. This is a sad state of affairs when one considers how few cannot read or write now and there is no need for anyone to be submissive under Christian indoctrination, thanks to public libraries, TV and radio.

BERNARD WHITING

BURNS

I have read the article by Norman Paton on the religious beliefs of Burns with interest and pleasure. However Burns's house in Dumfries was far from being a slum, and though not of course up to modern standards was nevertheless a respectable middle-class dwelling. As a farmer in a small way of business Burns was a hard working man, but he laboured on his own rented fields, and was not at any time a hired ploughman.

As an excise man, first at £50 a year and later at £70, he was not by any means a poor man considering that the wage of a ploughman in those days was only £7 per year (with food and bothy) or consider Goldsmith's parson, "Passing rich on forty pounds a year". But Burns's rent for his farm at Mossiel was £90 per year, not easy to come by on the proceeds of a small farm.

And this unjust rent was probably the cause of his abandoning farming.

M. CALPIN

I found Norman Paton's article on Burns rather interesting and appreciative, but I think it is wrong to try to fit Burns into any particular category. One can enjoy and appreciate Burns without labelling him a deist, agnostic, or socialist. Personally speaking I would not be put off Burns, even if he believed in the Holy Ghost, because I like his poems and songs.

Burns was too much a genius as a poet to fit into any rigid mental strait-jacket of thought, and I don't think his religious instruction did him much harm, as he had the power to throw it aside. You just can't expect a giant to put on the shoe of a dwarf. Yet for all that Burns was in a way a religious man, although he certainly did not tie himself down to any strict moral rules in order to show himself as being a cut above others.

In that sense I much prefer Burns's morals with religion to Margaret Knight's morals without religion. And to those who think that they are morally superior to other sections of society, it may do them well to read Burns's address *To The Unco Guid*.

O ye, wha are sae guid yoursel,

Sae pious and sae holy,

Ye've nought to do but mark and tell

Your neebours' fauts and folly;

Burns, like Shakespeare, was well aware of human weakness, but was sympathetic toward it.

Ken gently scan your brother Man,

Still gentler sister Woman;

Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang

To step aside is human.

R. SMITH

"GREAT WORLD ATLAS"

May I draw your readers' attention to the *Great World Atlas* published and distributed by The Reader's Digest Association Ltd.

This atlas is interspersed with biblical passages which precede most of the explanations in its section three. These passages obviously represent the "Contributions" made by clerics listed in the "Acknowledgement" at the beginning of the atlas.

Unfortunately I did not notice the passages when I bought the atlas. I would have returned it as I consider it an impudence of that Christian organisation to make propaganda for religious interests by inserting these ridiculous and idiotic passages and let the unsuspecting buyer of the atlas pay for it at that. I informed the Readers Digest Association Ltd. today of my disgust.

WM. A. CURTIS.

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THERE is, at present, one significant exception to the general Protestant practice of pulling one's theological punches where the Church of Rome is concerned. This is constituted not by any of the more respectable Churches, all of whom are tending to become more and more respectful towards their holy (shall we say?) "godfathers" at Rome, but by that bizarre American-derived sect who officially style themselves the International Bible Students, but who are more commonly known by their pseudonym of Jehovah's Witnesses. For rather paradoxically just at a time when in secular affairs the Vatican (the richest capitalist in the world) is the blue-eyed boy of Wall Street, and at a time when America is becoming spiritually Rome's most promising field for expansion, the Witnesses are one Protestant sect to "protest" in season and out of season against the totalitarian claims of the Vatican.

In fact, if the present drift towards Rome by Protestants continues much longer on its present course, we shall probably end with the startling situation that the only militant bodies which are still prepared to wage all out total war against Rome will be the National Secular Society and the Witnesses to Jehovah.

The ironies of universal history are indeed, endless, and the history of religion is no exception. But certainly the prospect is decidedly intriguing of the respective followers of Charles Bradlaugh and of the Lord Jehovah combining in a united front to combat the present intensive drive to world power being planned at the Vatican Council by the anti-Christ of Rome! For if the National Secular Society is anti-Roman because it is anti-Christian, the reverse is the case with the Witnesses. They are anti-Catholic precisely because they *are* Christians—pure-blooded authentic millenarian revivalist Christians, just as were the earliest Christians who followed the Master, as was Jesus himself (assuming that is, that Professor Solomon Zeitlin is correct in his learned contention recently published in these columns that there was an historical figure at the root of the Gospel mythology).

Jesus the Revivalist

Without exception, all the leading figures depicted in the New Testament—Jesus himself, John the Baptist and John the Apostle, not to mention Peter and Paul—are all depicted in the texts as revivalists eagerly awaiting the end of this world and the terrestrial Armageddon due to precede it, a cosmic "Waterloo" depicted in terrifying imagery in the Apocalypse (Revelation) almost certainly the oldest extant Christian scripture. For the Apocalypse vividly displays the millenarian beliefs of the first Christian generations. Today, 19 centuries later these, too, are the authentic beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses and apparently of them alone.

We repeat, the Church of Rome has nowadays to fight on two fronts: against post-Christian scepticism embodied pre-eminently in the contemporary atheism of the National Secular Society and kindred bodies, and against

primitive (very primitive) Christianity embodied in the Witnesses. For we concede that the Witnesses are *bona fide* primitive (i.e. pre-Catholic) Christians. We will even go so far as to concede as at least probable, that were Jesus and his twelve apostles to visit this 20th century, they would join, not the Vatican "racket" (as the Witnesses themselves describe it) or even the Church of England. They would, we think, make (if we may use

this slightly irreverent phrase) a bee-line to the next International Convention of the International Bible Students' Conference which is scheduled to be held in June. For whilst the Witnesses speak English (American version) and not Aramaic, as the early

Christians presumably did, the mental outlook of the two groups is virtually identical.

Witnesses' Convention in Eire

Rather surprisingly, this Pentecostal event, complete we assume with the mass baptisms by total immersion that represent its normal accompaniment (precisely as in the days of John the Baptist and of Jesus), is to be held in Ireland next June (where, we trust, the mass total immersions will not take place in the waters of the Liffey which are rumoured to be none of the cleanest).

But as might be expected, this decision to hold the convention in that traditional stronghold of Holy Church, the "isle of saints and scholars" itself did not pass unopposed. The Witnesses, no doubt employing the wisdom of the serpent so highly recommended by the gospels themselves, approached Drumcandra Football Club for the lease of its Tolka Park, and the directors, being presumably more familiar with the intricacies of football than with the niceties of theology, accepted unquestioningly. For, no doubt due to their American origin, the Witnesses appear to be much better provided with money (the apostolic "root of all evil") than were their early Christian prototypes, and apparently paid on the nail.

However, this religious business transaction did not transpire without opposition, for we read in the (Irish) *Sunday Press* (December 20th, 1964), that: "At a meeting during the week of the League of Ireland management committee, Mr. Andy Kettle of Bohemians, protested against the letting of the Park to the group whose beliefs he said are opposed to the [Irish] Constitution". This last statement presumably refers to the initial clause in the present Constitution of the Irish Republic (1938), which begins by a solemn affirmation of the Catholic dogma of the Holy (most Holy) Trinity; a belief rejected by the Witnesses as unscriptural (as indeed it is) and therefore un-Christian. This, incidentally, is not the first time that this "heresy" has been noted in the Irish Republic. However, Mr. Kettle's footballing colleagues—evidently at the receiving end of a fat cheque from the organisers of the forthcoming convention—dismissed the protest.

The *Sunday Press* reported that Mr. Sam Prole (chairman of Drumcandra Football Club and President of the

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Jehovah versus St. Patrick

By F. A. RIDLEY

League of Ireland Management Committee) had stated that "Most of them will be coming here from the USA and from other countries and that they will keep very much to themselves. Their representatives have not attempted to preach anything to us—all we have talked about is money. I cannot see anything wrong with letting them have the park". (My italics—F. A. R.)

So it seems those implacable enemies of Rome, Jehovah's Witnesses, are due to hold their next Inter-

national Convention in June in the Irish Republic, officially consecrated to the (most) Holy Trinity. It is almost enough to bring St. Patrick back in person!

More soberly, two relevant deductions may be drawn from this tangled business. Firstly, that even in Catholic lands nowadays, money speaks all languages; and secondly, that even primitive Christians have moved with the times and have learned the indispensable art of combining the service of both God and mammon.

Humanist School

By DAVID TRIBE

IT WAS a very happy occasion for all members of the old Humanist Council to welcome Patrick van Rensburg and Mr. and Mrs. Don Baker to London from Swaneng Hill School, Bechuanaland. Mrs. van Rensburg was unfortunately absent through illness from the gathering at 13 Prince of Wales Terrace on January 15th, the occasion of the school's second anniversary.

The progress made in those two years is truly astonishing. In an advanced technological country with its planning and administrative arrangements, such a balance sheet would be cause for congratulation. When we consider the shortage of money, materials, equipment and skilled manpower in Bechuanaland, the achievement is seen to be magnificent. It is a source of enormous satisfaction to the Ethical Union, the National Secular Society, the Rationalist Press Association and Humanist Group Action to recall that Elizabeth van Rensburg was a founding member of HGA and that the project was first put on its feet with money raised by the Humanist Council (EU, NSS, RPA).

Other help has followed: — work by a party of student volunteers from South Africa, an anonymous grant of £12,000 from a foundation, special encouragement by Seretse Khama, who has himself worked there with students and has promised financial support if he is elected to power after independence. But the most encouraging aspect has been the community self-help of the Swaneng students themselves.

This is indeed the keynote of the project. Besides theological indoctrination, too many mission schools are indictable for paternalism in their social theory, and have done little or nothing to encourage adulthood and personal responsibility among the native peoples they are trying to help. The symbol is Lambarene, not local autonomy. Patrick van Rensburg and his team of volunteer teachers have a very different objective. They are not simply imparting factual information, or pinning ideological labels to themselves or their students, but helping them to achieve self-realisation and self-fulfilment. Not in any rarefied speculative sense. The problems of Africa are too real and pressing for such a luxury. But in living, working relationships.

In a territory with a population of over 300,000 and but seven small secondary schools, basic education is an urgent need. Last year Swaneng had 75 students, their average age approaching twenty. This year the number will double (a third of them girls) and the average age fall. Also important in this hate-torn subcontinent is the principle of interracialism, though as yet no white students have enrolled. But Mr. van Rensburg sees that the most important contribution he can make to the protectorate at the moment is the vision and the substance of community help.

He has therefore guided the establishment by the people of the neighbouring town of Serowe (population 36,000), in the teeth of opposition by the local traders, of the first

co-operative store in the entire protectorate. In an area where 90 per cent of the population is economically dependent on the cattle industry, and which is often short of food and water, he has aided the formation of a co-operative cattle marketing society, the repair and building of dams stone by stone, and the stocking of swamps with fish. If he can raise sufficient funds he hopes to appoint a vice-principal to direct the academic studies to leave him free to concentrate on social work and fund-raising (the inevitable concomitant of all projects).

The students are learning manual skills in the actual construction of their own school during weekends and vacations. It is not just a place of education but a part of their lives. In addition they learn English, the local language, history, geography, mathematics, pure and applied science, agriculture and animal husbandry and dietetics. There is no religion. At present most of the boys plan to become teachers and the girls nurses.

Mr. and Mrs. Baker are returning to England for at least the period of their son's primary education. As he entered again the world of Kidbrooke and Rivinghill Don Baker spoke warmly of the thirst for knowledge in all his Swaneng students and the complete absence of discipline problems. Let us hope that when Bechuanaland becomes an "affluent society" a scrubland jungle will not become a blackboard jungle.

The capital costs of the existing buildings have already been found; not reserves for steady expansion. For running costs on the existing basis of voluntary teachers £3,000 per annum is required. A further £3,000 would be needed to support a staff on full professional rates, and £1,000 for the appointment of a vice-principal. The school already has a film projector and tape-recorder with which, when there is more leisure, promotional material on which successful public meetings and governmental and trust support so much depend, can be prepared. In the meantime British Humanists can assist with gifts of money, books (especially fiction), and clothing for jumble sales. Money can be given through the Humanist Council Trust Fund (earmarked Swaneng), c/o 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W.8. Other gifts should be sent direct to Swaneng Hill School, P.O. Box 101, Serowe, Bechuanaland Protectorate. There can be few worthier causes.

PRAYER MATS IN SCHOOL

So many children of coloured immigrants attend Dewsbury schools that the local Education Committee has decided that if any more go religious services may be introduced for Moslems.

Pupils at Victoria Boys' Secondary Modern School already attend services in the school every Friday. This, Mr. Eric Sleight, headmaster, says, is because the Moslems, mostly Pakistanis, have been to services at Savile Town at lunchtime on Fridays and sometimes returned to school late.

To avoid this, he offered them the use of the school hall and the boys take their own prayer mats.—*The Yorkshire Post* (29/1/65).

The Rationalist Annual 1965

By D. C. CHAPMAN

"I HAVE reached the age of seventy-one, and been operated for a cancer near the hind end of my intestine". Being a biometrician J. B. S. Haldane then goes on to assess his chances for a long life provided his cancer has not colonised elsewhere. The end came sooner than Haldane expected so that the leading essay in this year's *Rationalist Annual* reads much like a farewell from someone who lived life vigorously and bravely. Often as not he was his own best guinea pig in his brilliant work in physiology and genetics. Haldane seemed to thrive on trouble and stories about this man abound, as will happen with any colourful character, but the one I like best took place in India, the land of yoga and fakirs who pass the day trying to conceive of a stick with only one end. What a shock to the Indians then to find this hulking child of the West outdoing their holymen—stretched out stark naked in a lily pond observing the habits of tadpoles!

His contribution to this volume is mainly folksy reminiscences as he skims over different items that interested him in life and gave him pleasure. He catalogues the various narcotics he tried, savours the memory of "the embraces of two notoriously beautiful women", quotes from the Upanisads, philosophises on art and science and, of course, makes a few digs at religion. Mystics and religionists are notorious for the lack of thought they have expended towards substantiating their claims and it is interesting seeing Haldane's scientific mind devising tests for their positions. If ghosts exist then why weren't the battlefields of World War I better represented in this regard? If reincarnation is possible then why have no undeciphered languages been solved by such believers?

The "Problem of Pain" is the title of the next essay by R. C. Churchill. This brings to mind the late well known Christian apologist, C. S. Lewis, who wrote a book by the same title. As would be expected, some clever mental contortions were necessary to reconcile an all-loving god with the observation of widespread misery. And Lewis's own ruminations along these lines betrayed a certain attraction to "Diabolism", according to Hector Hawton, who happens to be the editor of this volume. As Churchill points out, the problem of pain perplexes the Christian no end in his theology but fits in quite understandably with a rationalistic view of the world; however, there is still the problem for the rationalist whether pain can ennoble one as some have claimed or whether it is always degrading. This problem is too complicated to be discussed in a few pages, but nevertheless the pros and cons are touched upon and the repulsive views of some cynical modern authors are mentioned. Some may question Churchill's idea that bodily or mental pain develops the faculties one already possesses or that the medical alleviation of neuroses will mean the end of certain kinds of literature and art, but whatever the case, the reader is given some new ideas and examples to chew on for himself.

Benjamin Farrington likes his Humanism plain and sails especially at those who would modify "Humanism" with "Evolutionary". We soon learn that it is really Darwin's artistic sensibilities that have aroused this author's ire and in his essay he has some naughty things indeed to say about Charles. The argument is the all-that-Caruso-could-do-was-sing one where we are informed that the early Darwin's theology was as jejune as the later one's atheism, or that compared with the aesthete,

Samuel Butler, Darwin was but a bore. Darwin's ecstasy over the beauty of the Brazilian forest is not enough to admit him to the club, and this I think is a form of snobbery which only accepts as valid those aesthetic pursuits like music and poetry which lend themselves to notation and communication—as well as much fatuous commentary.

Although a Marxist, Farrington shows himself to be an idealist and one who hankers after the mystical. Only an idealist who has disregarded the world around him would say that the choice of one's studies and the order of priorities are determined by man's vision of the future. He likes the idea of tuning in on other aspects of a fuller reality with an undisclosed sensory faculty denied the more pedestrian among us.

"If we eliminate mind from biological evolution," asks Farrington, "can we give any satisfactory account of its presence at the psychosocial stage?" This problem is complicated by his belief that mind is not entirely brain-dependent, and one gets the sneaking suspicion that he would like the independent part to be "out there" directing evolution instead of being left to more physical factors. Unless mosquitoes and the like do have dreams (as was asked of Ripley) and hence minds then I think evolution can proceed quite well without "mind" as shown by events in the Paleozoic. Mind did, of course, come into being and has itself evolved, but as to the mystery of this event and transition back to neurological functions resembling mind, these are problems for workers like Darwin and not the mystic.

For those who like reading about existentialism, Maurice Cranston has saved you the trouble of trying to digest Sartre's unreadable 755-page *Critique de la raison dialectique*. Sartre emerges from this essay more than just a little sullied after Cranston shows that Sartre lifted his ideas on the structure of society from Hobbes and Hume. In his attempt to refurbish Marxism with an existential outlook, Sartre clearly fails to synthesise the opposites in the two systems he must work with. This curious amalgam of jargon and theorising results in an intellectually dishonest schizophrenia that allowed Sartre to defend Stalin's terror while Stalin was alive but attack him after his death.

There are two articles on the psyche, T. S. Szasz's "Psychiatry as Ideology" and E. H. Hutten's "Can Psychology be a Science?" Szasz points out how quickly an outgrowth of Freud's ideas caught on in the USA to replace the explanations of sin and the machinations of the devil as the causes of certain forms of anti-social behaviour with an explanation based on mental illness. A psychiatric ideology therefore filled the ethical void that resulted from this melting-pot society that could form no other type of social criterion for behaviour. Actually Freud believed, as does Szasz, that many forms of mental illness are just deviations from conventional ideas on how one should act and as such are not worthwhile problems for scientific inquiry. Szasz is alarmed that judges should believe it is possible for psychiatrists to define mental illness and to license them to exert social control by their pronouncements. There are cases of involuntary psychiatric confinement for the treatment of behaviour which is not considered conventional by the authorities who reflect a middle-class view. Ideologies are not self-critical as is necessary in science if progress is to continue, so that this

(Continued on page 55)

This Believing World

One remarkable fact stands out in the fine tributes to the work of Sir Winston Churchill which we heard after his death, and that is, not one speaker—as far as we know—ever said that he had put his trust in God and Jesus. Our dead leader probably would have called himself a Christian, but in the extracts of his stirring speeches we heard, God, Jesus, the Virgin Birth, or even the Bible, were never mentioned. Churchill obviously preferred to rely on the sensible secularist creed of "Do It Yourself".

★

Even the Archbishop of Canterbury, in his eulogy on Churchill on TV, never mentioned Churchill's religion. Instead, he concentrated on the great gift which God gave us in Churchill, prayed to the Almighty to reward the dead leader with a place in Paradise for eternity, and implored all his hearers to pray to and adore God always and for ever. In fact, the speech mentioned God far more than Churchill. It was a masterpiece of fatuity.

★

To get a freethought letter in such a religious newspaper as the *Daily Telegraph* is indeed something to be proud of. And in its issue of January 23rd there was one headed, "Gospel Stories of Virgin Birth" (referred to in Notes and News last week), in which Mr. J. P. Davidson was allowed to call the gospels "anonymous documents" and the stories in them of the Virgin Birth, "a cycle of legends". Unfortunately, he gives 85-90AD as the date for the composition of Luke, which is just nonsense. Luke was quite unknown by name before 180 AD.

★

Strange to say, spirit photographers, after flourishing here in England during the nineteenth century and the beginning of this, appear to have vanished completely—though some may be found still in Nicaragua, Lapland, and Alabama. Instead, we have artists who "see" the spirits of the departed and sketch them almost as vividly, or perhaps we ought to say, far more vividly, than any camera. The "genuine" spirit photographs we have seen, always appeared to have some fluff around them like a mass of cottonwool, and the spirit "likeness" generally seemed a badly blurred copy of a photograph already in existence.

★

Spirit artists disclaim the cottonwool effect of course, and boldly draw in pencil, crayon, or charcoal. One of these drawings appeared recently in *Psychic News*, of a young man who had "passed on". And alongside was his photograph, to show how true was the artist's likeness. It certainly was—though to one who has no "spirit" eye, it looked as if an art student had copied the photo direct. Now we have artists drawing or painting guides direct from Summerland. As an example, there is one of "Red Cloud" well known to readers of Spiritualistic journals. And if one was wanted of "Blithe Spirit" it would be almost certainly produced. Perhaps one day we shall get Summerland in all its glory televised . . . !

★

In a New Year message published in the *Methodist Recorder* and reported in *Time & Tide* (January 20th), Dr. Donald Soper suggested a ban on Bible reading for a year and a rule that all sermons should have a political text instead of a biblical one. These are the things Dr. Soper would command if he had a royal prerogative to have his wishes granted. "The present situation with regard to the Scriptures is intolerable," he said. "They represent an intellectual incubus that cannot be removed until an almost completely new start is made with this controversial docu-

ment." The need, we suggest to Dr. Soper, is not to make a new start with the Bible, but to finish with it.

Reflections on Religious Schools

I DISAGREE with Mrs. Knight that religious schools should be self-supporting. She can have no idea of the terrible condition those schools were in before they were taken over by the Government in about 1905.

They were usually toppling-down old buildings with outside smelly lavatories. Often up to 120 were crowded into one room. There could be no freedom for them or their teachers. What ruled the school was discipline, which resulted in unbridled caning of little children who spent the best part of the day sobbing and falling off the crowded galleries.

Moreover the head teacher and priest could sack a teacher at a moment's notice. I knew a teacher whom the priest sacked because she had a boy friend; on the plea that now her interest would be in him and not on her work. The priest sometimes neglected to pay the teachers' salaries. Once on crossing over to Ireland I met an Irish teacher who said to me "How lucky you are to be teaching in England; your salary is paid directly to you. I get mine through the priest; for that I have to cycle six miles to his house and how often I've gone there to be told by his housekeeper 'His Reverence is out, will you call in a few days time'. All the time I could see the priest reading in the parlour."

I began teaching in 1908, and so came under some of these type of head teachers who wielded the cane. The school was situated in Bow and the headmaster boasted, "I can cane the children as much as I like. Two of the boys' fathers took me to court and the magistrate said he always gave the judgment in these cases for the teachers." The priest came in every Monday morning and gave six cuts of the cane on each hand to any boy who had missed mass on Sunday.

I went home to Tipperary when the summer holidays came. I asked four teachers I met where they were off to. "We are going to a special mass against a law that the English Government is going to pass by which our salaries are to be paid directly to us and not through the priest as is done now," they said. "But we will not accept those conditions because it would take away the power of the priest." I argued with them but it was of no avail.

I wince now when I think of the canings of those poor miserable, hungry children, stunted by the want of love in their lives; all huddled up in old ragged clothes, their trousers tied up with a sughan of straw, no socks, no shirts, their toes out through their boots—many indeed barefooted even in winter.

The priests didn't spend much time indoctrinating the children. They left that to the teacher. The last school I was in there were five teachers and only the headmistress was a believer. The priest's answer when he was accused of neglecting the school was, "Why should I be interested in the school, I make no money out of it".

The Government has certainly curtailed the power of the priest; he can only dismiss a teacher if she refuses to teach the religion. Children can feel things. They knew we didn't believe. A child once said to me, "Miss Flanagan, you don't believe one word of the catechism and yet you teach it to us".

"Well, Elsie", I answered, "I stay here because I love you children and want you to see that there are other opinions besides those of the priests. Also I must earn my living. All this is our secret."

NAN FLANAGAN

THE FREETHINKER

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Telephone: HOP 2717

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.
London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.
(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: L. EBURY.
Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street.) Sunday Evenings
Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.
North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.
Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square). every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Glasgow Secular Society (Central Halls, 25 Bath Street), Sunday, February 14th, 3 p.m.: Messrs. CRONAN, HYSLOP, McRAE and MURRAY, "Brains Trust".
Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, February 14th, 6.30 p.m.: Professor HYMAN LEVY, "The Role of Imagination in Science".
Manchester Branch NSS (Wheatsheaf Hotel, High Street), Sunday, February 14th, 7.30 p.m.: F. J. CORINA, "God in the Modern World".
Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, February 14th, 7.30 p.m.: F. A. RIDLEY, "The Vatican Council—The Summing-Up".
Richmond and Twickenham Humanist Group (Room 5, Community Centre, Sheen Road), Thursday, February 18th, 8 p.m.: STANLEY MAYNE, "Civil Liberty".
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square London, W.C.1), Sunday, February 14th, 11 a.m.: JOHN BURROWS, "Democratic Trends and Social Change".
Tuesday, February 16th, 7.30 p.m.: RAYMOND ROWLEY, "Cruel Sports".

Notes and News

OUR two women contributors this week, Nan Flanagan and Gillian Hawtin are both ex-Roman Catholic teachers. They are, however, from very different backgrounds—Miss Flanagan having been brought up a Catholic in Ireland, whereas Miss Hawtin was a convert—and their experiences were separated by half a century.

★

THE Pope has again showed his affinity to Pius XII, rather than John XXIII, by calling on the Comitati Cibici, the financially powerful and—as the *Guardian* (1/2/65) put it—"somewhat mysterious secular branch of the Italian hierarchy" to return to the job of "illuminating" and "persuading Italian voters and politicians to follow the dictates of Catholic morality". The Comitati Cibici had not been received in the Vatican since the death of Pius XII, who used them as an "instrument of psychological pressure" against the Christian Democrats during the time of Alcide de Gasperi. Their leader, Dr. Luigi Geeda was involved

in the unsuccessful attempt in 1952 to bring the Neo-Fascist and Catholic parties into coalition. Relations between the Vatican and the Christian Democrats are again strained, and Dr. Geeda has, we learn, been received in audience by Pope Paul six times in the past few months. On January 30th, two days before the meeting of the Christian Democrat National Council, Dr. Geeda and 2,000 Comitati Cibici leaders were at the Vatican.

★

DETAILS have come to light, the *Observer* reported (31/1/65), of "bitter dispute" over the appointment of a successor to Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft as General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. The dispute took up much of the time and energy of the recent meeting of the Central Committee of the WCC at Enugu, Nigeria. The Committee had been expected to ratify the choice of the Scottish Episcopalian, the Rev. Patrick Rodger, who had been nominated by the Executive. The East Germans however, suggested that Dr. Visser 't Hooft should stay on until August next year, and this motion was passed. But what puzzled many of the delegates was, the *Observer* said, the change that came over Dr. Visser 't Hooft himself. "No one had asked him to resign: it had been his own idea that he was getting too old. Suddenly, he seemed to be fighting tooth and nail to stay on, not just until 1966, but until after the next World Assembly in 1968, by which time he will be 68." And, the *Observer* continued, "he is believed to have drafted the last German motion" because he disapproved of Mr. Rodger's nomination.

★

THE Italian left-wing press has rightly criticised an article by Mgr. Lambruschini in the Vatican weekly newspaper, *l'Osservatore Romano della Domenica*, which declared that taxpayers were not morally bound to abide strictly by the truth in completing their income tax forms. Roman Catholics may be entitled to lie about their incomes in legitimate defence against the inflated demands of the state, said the Rome *Paese Sera*, "but where does the poor non-Catholic stand?" Mgr. Lambruschini's advice is open to objection on more than one ground, but the principal complaint—the *Times* informed us (30/1/65)—was that "it favours employers at the cost of employees". The income of employees is declared by their employers, who are free to lie about their own profits but are sure to be accurate when declaring the wages of their dependants.

★

THE Archbishop of York, writing on Sunday observance in the February issue of the *York Diocesan Leaflet*, acknowledged that some features of the present legislation are outdated and should be removed from the Statute Book. To retain them only brought Sunday observance into ridicule. But we must, said Dr. Coggan, seek to enunciate principles which will guide those who legislate for a nation, a large part of which owes no active allegiance to the Christian faith. "We must insist on the principle of one day of rest in seven as being of divine institution," he said. "The right of every man to worship on Sunday must be guarded," and "organised games which make work for large numbers of transport workers, police and so on should be restricted on Sundays. These are elementary principles but they will need watching." And, Dr. Coggan quoted: "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance".

★

RELICS of St. Edmund, patron saint of England until superseded by St. George, have now been proved authentic—at least to the satisfaction of the British Roman Catholic hierarchy.

Catholic Evangelism

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

THE conventual institution, the Catholics themselves say, may pass away when its work is done. Since it flourishes, we may therefore argue that its work is *not* done. What then, is that work? It is evangelisation.

The convent schools are colonising, they are planting outliars, spawning everywhere. I turn to *The Convents of Great Britain and Ireland*, by Francesca M. Steele (Sands, 1924) and choosing three orders at random. I note they have houses to the number of four, four and fourteen respectively. I turn next to the latest edition of the *Directory of Religious Orders, Congregations and Societies*, and discover that the same orders now have six, seven, and twenty-three houses respectively. In addition, two have their own training colleges. These are active teaching orders. It is even more surprising to find that whereas in 1924 the Carmelites, possibly the most severe of contemplative orders, had twenty houses in England, three in Jersey, and one in Glasgow, they have now increased to twenty-seven in this country, and seven in Scotland. Their sole activities, apart from praying and religious exercises, are listed as making altar breads, vestments and altar linen, printing, painting, the whole being done "according to requirements".

"Do you think," I once heard a Catholic priest say, "a certain political party worries if it wins seats at the General Election? They work in other ways. If England were taken over by them, the *coup d'état* would come another way". Belloc, in *How the Reformation Happened*, devoted several chapters to showing how gradually the old faith was lost sight of by the people, because a revolution had occurred at the top. Could not that same process be reversed? The organisation of the episcopal established Church remains much as it came from Catholic lands in the 16th century. In its present position, honest neither to God nor to man, with diminished congregations, flirting with ecumenism, and lightly adopting the vestments of the mass in the mistaken belief they have no significance, the Church of England does *not* stand as a bulwark of Protestantism; it is a void which may one day be filled by the Roman hierarchy. The British Council of Churches has set 1980 as the date for reunion. Take care it is not reunion with Rome. When a Catholic prays, though with brotherly love in his heart, "*Ut unum sint*," he prays that the other fellow should become a Catholic. Reunion means absorption. The Catholic Church will not disdain the odd convert; his soul is of infinite worth. But they will strike for the centre, to capture the whole system and machine.

Do not think that the Catholic Church will ever rest while England remains lost to her. She prays for its conversion continuously; she works for it ceaselessly. From the moment of the Reformation in the 16th century, she sent her missionary priests here. The Elizabethan government was under no illusion; the penalty for operation was death. Three or four centuries is nothing for the Church of Rome; she takes a long view. And remember, it is not only our philosophy and our law that we owe to the freedom of inquiry which the Reformation won for us. Has not an overwhelming percentage of the science and technology which has transformed the wide world come from Protestant countries? But the situation is not immutable. It is not at all fantastic to suppose that these liberties can be lost. It is good to remind ourselves from time to time of the Utraquist heresy, or the fury of Rome against the Albigenes, but it may be more prudent to

look to the future. It matters not if 90 per cent of this land be Protestant or Agnostic, if minorities, determined, well organised, work revolutions.

Writing over twenty-five years ago about the death of Arianism, Belloc (in *The Great Heresies*, Sheed and Ward, 1938), said:

This is the fashion in which the first of the great heresies which threatened at one moment to undermine and destroy the whole of Catholic society, disappeared. The process had taken almost three hundred years, and it is interesting to note that as far as doctrines are concerned, about that space of time, or a little more, sufficed to take the substance out of the various main heresies of the Protestant reformers.

He concluded his book with the words:—

Even the most misguided, or the most ignorant of men, talking vaguely of "churches" are now using a language that rings hollow. The last generation could talk, in Protestant countries at least, of "the churches". The present generation cannot. There are not many churches; there is one. It is the Catholic Church on the one side, and its mortal enemy on the other. The lists are set.

If you dislike the voice of a Catholic historian—though he does nothing else, here, than uphold Bradlaugh when the latter spoke of the ultimate conflict being between Rome and Reason—you may remind yourself of the words of J. M. Robertson, in the final chapter of *A Short History of Christianity*:—

The ultimate problem is to forecast the future. A confident faith in continual progress is one of the commonest states of mind of the present . . . though of late the assumption has been increasingly challenged. In view of the unmistakable decadence of the creeds as such, it is natural for rationalists to expect an early reduction of Christianity to the status now held by "folk-lore". . . But while this may be called probable, there can be no scientific certainty in the matter. For one thing, the process must for economic reasons be much slower than used to be thought likely, for instance, in the time of Voltaire . . . Voltaire was so far right that a century has seen the old Christianity abandoned, after a reaction, by a large part of the best intelligence of our age, as it was by that of his. But there may be more reactions . . . The average of mind is still poor beside the best . . . It is indeed dimly conceivable that . . . the mere warfare of capital and labour may end in the degradation of the people, and the consequent reduction of upper-class life to the plane of mere sensuous gratification and "practical science". In either event, a religion now seen by instructed men to be incredible may be preserved by a community neither instructed nor religious. But that is a speculation, not a scientific forecast.

Unfortunately, it is rather less a speculation, and closer to becoming a forecast than might have been dreamed to be possible a few decades ago.

It is sometimes hoped, in this country, that a wedge can be driven between the clergy and the laity. The facts do not support the hope. The Catholic body has grown in strength, numbers, organisation, and demands since the act of toleration in 1829. A. C. F. Beales (who has never had any inhibitions about the protagonism of his beliefs notwithstanding his academic position) reminds us that until 1847 the Catholics struggled to get a share in government grants for school building. From then until 1902 they fought for a share of local education rates. By the Act of 1902, the schools, once built, were to be given 90 per cent running costs by the local education authorities. Since 1902 the Catholic claim, growing by what it fed upon, has had full support. Wrote Beales, in 1950:—

The Catholics of this country have a public reputation for knowing their faith, knowing their own mind, and standing solidly together when a public issue arises which affects their position. The sudden appearance of Catholic Parents and Electors Associations all over the country in 1945, to meet the coming education bill, is only the latest manifestation of

a solidarity which had raised nearly half a million pounds for the Ensis Fund in 1870, and had a profound influence in securing the success which Cardinal Vaughan achieved in the Balfour Act of 1902.

In 1895 there appeared a maxim in *The Tablet*, later made famous by Sir John Gilbert: — "Catholic education for all Catholic children, in Catholic schools". Does the reader realise to what extent independent convent schools are dependent on non-Catholic fees? Here are figures for 1955, from a Catholic source: —

Children at Catholic Independent Schools						
BOYS			GIRLS			
Age	Total	RC	Non-Catholic	Total	RC	Non-Catholic
5-15	100	83	17	100	51	49
5-11	100	78	22	100	50	50
11-15	100	90	10	100	52	48

Catholics, so far from being abashed at asking for their own schools when state schools are already provided, tell us how they have lightened the burden of the state schools by providing education at their own expense for their own children.

It must be remembered [writes Beales] that the State receives, and has received, over many years, the benefit of schools which Catholics have provided entirely out of private money, and that the people (often very poor) who subscribed this money, were in addition paying their full share of the rates and taxes which go to support the schools provided by the State . . . They have had to pay twice over, and both payments are today much heavier than they were in the past. One more burden imposed by Catholicism upon the Catholic layman. No birth control—and double charges for the results!

But the layman believes he is fighting for his eternal salvation, and for that of his children, when he fights for his own schools. You may see this in all countries and centuries. There has been a second collection for this express purpose, since 1944, every mass, every Sunday, in every Catholic church. The situation will not change because of the parents' financial sacrifices. It is like this now, it was so twenty years ago, it was so two hundred years ago. In penal days, Catholics of any rank and fortune sent their children to the Continent, Douai especially. Until after 1829, fluent French was the mark of the educated Catholic, though to go abroad for one's education was to incur the penalty of losing the right to any real property.

We cannot always rely on support at ministerial level. Mr. George Tomlinson, opening a Catholic school at York in October, 1948, said: "Catholics can rest assured that the government will respect their rights. Schools like this are the only antidote to the many problems facing us in the world today."

"Schools like this" stand for the Syllabus of Errors which tells us it is heresy that "every man is free to embrace and profess the religion he shall believe true, guided by the light of reason". "Schools like this" stand for censorship. In Eire this does not merely mean banning Macchiavelli or James Joyce; it means excluding every trumpet novel which has a reference to a divorce or an act of adultery.

We may obtain more help from the sturdy anti-Catholicism of the local education authorities. Here there has been frequent resistance to Catholic demands, often overridden by ministerial intervention. R.A. Butler had his doubts, on April 4th, 1944, whether the Catholic body could find the ten million required of them at that date. However, find it they did. Open the *Catholic Herald* for September 25th, 1964, and read that sixteen new churches were opened in the diocese of Southwark within the last year, that eleven more are under construction, that the Salesian College at Battersea is to be rebuilt at a cost of £250,000.

Is the Catholic Church really so hard up? Is all this fuss really deflecting our attention from the fact they are

doing very nicely thank you? Are they extracting as much as they can out of the state in order to divert other funds to other purposes? If grace is all it's made out to be, why cannot it keep the child "safe" in a state school? We answer the Catholic demands with the question why should we support indoctrination?

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(Continued from page 51)

trend as well as the collusion of certain psychiatrists who play along are to be deplored.

Szasz does not say that society is not justified in setting some values even if other values would be workable in some other conceivable society, but I wish he would have raised this point and elaborated on it. He also leaves himself open to criticism when he mentions only borderline instances and not the many court cases involving extreme forms of pathological behaviour that could hardly be tolerated in any society. According to Szasz these people can be happy with their neuroses and should only receive psycho-analytic treatment on their own request because to do otherwise would not keep the ego intact. What would Szasz have us do: keep the ego intact and protect society by imprisonment or protect society and free the "criminal" after psycho-analytic treatment? I don't think such tamperings with the "ego" are as serious as Szasz vaguely implies and certainly would not result in some kind of mental collapse.

Hutten's essay is concerned with the validity of subjective evidence in psychology and whether the use of such data is scientific. He concludes that it is without sounding too much like Bishop Berkeley, but it is odd in his discussion of the act of observation he makes no mention of the philosophy of A. N. Whitehead; but perhaps Hutten is like myself and can't understand it.

Getting back to earth we have "Probation and the Crime Problem" by Howard Jones who simply outlines the present increasing incidence of crime in modern Great Britain and the successful application of group interviews by probation officers with their charges. The efficacy of this method with the working class seems to be related to their being more influenced by the opinions of their fellows.

"Why the Cross?" is H. J. McCloskey's blast at the Christian ideas concerning the cross. There is more than one set of beliefs on this topic and the author criticises them in turn, often pitting one modern theologian against another, but it is when McCloskey pits these doctrines against his own common sense that the fun begins; however, when these doctrines are examined from the angle of God's nature and the mentality of those who would worship such a being the whole matter becomes most unfunny, and one can see how these sentiments are a drag on any improvement in compassion and intelligence that is so surely needed in the world. McCloskey could have asked why, if the cross-business was so wonderful, didn't God have it done earlier? To the already-converted a criticism of these doctrines may sound like child's play but such matters need some repetition and to do it well is all the more commendable.

Different models and analogies have had their day in the history of science and the same is true for theology. The argument from design for the existence of God was once in vogue and used as its favourite example the watch which necessitated a mechanic because of the complexity and purposefulness of the parts. By analogy the complexity of the world necessitated a divine mechanic. M. H. Carré bothered to expend his energies in writing a learned history of the mechanism analogy as it developed in

England. I suppose the history of any idea is of interest though and Carré shows the interactions between pious scientists and professional theologians with the discoveries of the day until even this phase of theology also had to be stashed away in the already commodious trash-can for defunct religious endeavours. The end, of course, came with Darwinism which provided a better explanation for organic design. During the heyday of these ideas everyone seemed to shut his eyes to the amount of disorder present in nature and if they wanted to be consistent (as pointed out by Bertie) they should have also postulated a destroying deity.

Readers of this year's *Rationalist Annual* won't find any world-shaking ideas to inflame them, but most I'm sure will be entertained and informed upon dipping between the covers of this volume some cold winter's night. Just one last querulous query: why in this otherwise well-rounded selection of essays was there none on sex?

CORRESPONDENCE

CHRISTIANITY: THE DEBIT ACCOUNT

Mrs. Margaret Knight's article, "Christianity: the Debit Account" must surely be reckoned as one of the best things she has done.

It is saddening to realise how many well educated people there are whose knowledge of this subject is either perverted or lacking.

I think that such people, after making a careful study of the foul and bloody history—I use the politest possible language—of the Christian Church, must ask themselves whether they can honestly have anything to do with the damned thing.

A shocking question for a Christian, but a perfectly fair one. May one hope that Mrs. Knight will elaborate this article and publish it in booklet form?

A. W. COLEMAN

[We understand that Mrs. Knight has given permission for the *National Secular Society* to issue her article as a leaflet.—Ed.]

MARXISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL

F. A. Ridley advises me to read Plekhanov's book *The Role of the Individual in History*, and thinks by my doing so I may be able in future to criticise Kautsky and perhaps himself more intelligently. I like the perhaps himself bit.

Thanks for the advice Mr. Ridley, but I am sorry to tell you that I have read Plekhanov's book, and was not impressed by it at all. To say that exceptional men influence history insofar as they reflect the ideas of their epochs becomes a piece of rubbish when at the same time you claim that the historical process would evolve essentially the same way independent of their existence or influence. In what sense do exceptional individuals influence history, if as you have claimed in one of your letters, the whole historical process would evolve the same way independent of them?

You have claimed yourself that without Calvin the Reformation would have been defeated. How do you reconcile this striking claim with your Marxian view of an exceptional individual being merely one who exploits the ideas of his time, and also the view that the historical process would evolve the same way independent of his influence?

You say Marxism does not deny in toto the influence of the individual, yet you have claimed the counter-reformation would have succeeded but for Calvin. Yet you have the nerve to tell me to read Plekhanov in order to produce intelligent criticism of Marxism. I therefore seriously advise you to get your philosophical ideas in order first before starting to try to advise anyone. Then we may get some intelligent answers from you.

R. SMITH

CHURCHILL

Despite the many eulogies which are appearing in the nationalist press, of Sir Winston Churchill, the fact remains that here we had a man who had no time for deep and consistent thought about human affairs. If any humanist or freethinker had asked him whether he accepted the fundamental principle that human problems should be faced in terms of human intellectual and moral resources without invoking supernatural authority, he would have rejected any such suggestion.

The fact that prayers were said for him in churches all over the country and that the Queen and Prince Philip are mentioned as taking part in these prayers is a timely reminder that whether Sir Winston Churchill was a regular churchgoer or not—and it is suggested that he was not—he nevertheless did nothing to

remove the yoke of superstition with its repressive effects on education and scientific work which still hampers us in our efforts for greater public enlightenment and advance to world civilisation.

Sir Winston Churchill had no aptitude for the difficult task of achieving a consistent rational view of human affairs. Indeed he is well-known for his assertion that "Consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds". And of course this is the kind of assertion which humanists and secularists have very little patience with since it is obvious that the whole aim of scientists and philosophers is to achieve consistency in all branches of human knowledge and thought.

As for his interest in the whole of humanity around him we can see that he was a parochialist par excellence as shown by such statements as the following, "We must recollect what it is we have to contend for. It is for our liberty, it is for our independence, nay, for our existence as a nation".

Consistent humanists will agree readily that this is the very stuff from which the terrible international anarchy, which menaces the very survival of mankind, is constructed.

If his blindness to the menace of national independence is obvious, his support for monarchy and imperialism is equally made plain by many statements such as the following, "I have not become the King's First Minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire". But despite all the alleged strength of character and capacity for inspiring leadership which Churchill was alleged by other parochial patriots and imperialists to possess, the fact remains that the British Empire has been decimated and there are many new divisions and antagonisms at work which a little more care for real human sympathy and consistency of principle might well have avoided.

I am not being hardhearted in reminding freethinkers of these things. I just think that the future of the human race should be set above sentimentalism about a man whose past has failed to direct human social affairs into more intelligent and hopeful channels.

E. G. MACFARLANE

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EVERYTHING that can, and much that cannot, be said of Winston Churchill has already been said. How does one sort out the myth from the reality? Is the myth perhaps more important, as it is more interesting? He has been described as the greatest man of his generation and the greatest Englishman of all time. How does one measure greatness? Is the yardstick of the hearth the same as that of the study? Is either that of the newspaper office?

There can be few who witnessed the state funeral who did not find it a moving experience. England does this sort of thing supremely well. At the vulgar level it was an unparalleled gathering. In social terms everyone who was anyone was there—captains and kings, judges and presidents, mayors and prime ministers, high commissioners and ambassadors. One hundred and ten member nations of the United Nations were represented—probably more than at any one time may be found in the General Assembly itself. As they stood on the steps beneath the epic west front of St. Paul's Cathedral, overlooked by a polyglot concourse and nondescript buildings like the one from which Lee Harvey Oswald is alleged to have fired "successfully" at a moving target, who could guess the psychopathology and the fears of those present? And yet as I looked around, the uniformed police were as usual unarmed, the troops had their arms reversed in tribute, and there was not a single person visible that one could recognise as a security officer: either then or when later the cavalcade of cars passed within a few yards of where I was standing. Surely no other country could manage so daunting an operation with such consummate discretion. There was, in fact, nothing to distract from one's private thoughts.

Things to forget

In theory everyone was there simply to pay tribute to a man. Though he admitted to religious scepticism when young and always referred to God in the manner of Abraham Lincoln, it cannot be said that a religious funeral was, like Nehru's thrust upon him. But it was a pity. The phrases the world remembers are purely secular, and the diverse company sat oddly under an Anglican roof. Probably few thought about the service. It was a time to remember the best about the man.

De mortuis nil nisi bonum. Best to forget the histrionics in South Africa and Sidney Street; the opposition to women's suffrage, Indian independence and the welfare state; strike breaking in 1926, and the Gallipoli fiasco in 1915 (which was probably not his fault). Best not to look too closely at celebrated paintings and speculate how widely they would have been acclaimed if from a lesser hand. Best not to savour too carefully the histories, blanch at the telegraphese and the egocentricity, or linger on the journalistic one-upmanship that ensured the relevant documents remained the property of himself and not of the Public Records Office. Best not even to examine the teeth of the strategic hobby-horses he mounted during the great conflict, or the elocution of the great oratory. Best not to

recall, in International Co-operation Year, his contribution to the cold war.

It is easy to be cynical about politicians and statesmen. The anatomy of power is in many ways a gruesome cadaver. Sensitive folk find it too pachydermatous, and the intellectually discriminating too discoloured. Perhaps intellectuals are advised to keep away from it, for contact has seldom glorified either it or them. President Johnson and the Texans have in one year stage-managed through Congress a hundred measures that President Kennedy and the intellectuals failed to advance in three. I find such acknowledgment sad. But it seems to be true, nevertheless.

Or one can be merely contemptuous. "If you fail in everything else you can turn to politics," it is said. "They weren't able to teach Churchill anything at Harrow, and they couldn't later on. But it takes a dunce to make a political success." This is going as far in one direction as the myth does in another. For here is no mountebank, but a man with towering qualities.

There is courage: — the physical courage of Omdurman, Sidney Street and "see-for-himself" throughout the war, and the moral courage of twice crossing the floor of the House and facing the political wilderness in the thirties. If he rushed in and made mistakes, what a refreshing change from most "leaders" who make mistakes by doing nothing. There is imagination. True, it may have been the imagination of the Whig rather than the social historian; but there are occasions when men need to be stirred, and they are stirred by a vision, not a statistical table. There is enormous energy. At 65, the age most men are retiring, he undertook paramount responsibility in this country and—what was then no hack, embarrassing phrase—the Free World. No man could have worked harder. Twice the victim of pneumonia and in the knowledge of being the special target of every *Luftwaffe* bombardier, he kept going by unflagging willpower and a unique ability to relax. In those years he came to look like the British bulldog he represented throughout the world.

The Roar

At the creative level they thought of him as a many-sided genius. Not perhaps in the intellectual tradition of the Renaissance which has not by and large appealed to the English-speaking peoples. Rather in the manner of the amateurish versatility of the *Boy's Own Paper* heroes. What however was his actual achievement in the arts? I do not consider him a great writer, in that he is not to my mind sufficiently distinguished by psychological insight, command of mood or nuance of language. But in evocation of the heroic he is superb, and he would clearly have made a great political or war correspondent (which at one time he was). Though he might not have satisfied Professor Higgins, his diction was admirably suited to the roll of his oratory, inspired by the psalms in the Authorised Version, noble, simple, full of rich parallelisms and onomatopoeia. On the occasion of his eightieth birthday celebrations he said, with perhaps uncharacteristic

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

That Funeral

By DAVID TRIBE

modesty: "It was the nation and the race dwelling all round the globe that had the lion's heart. I had the luck to be called upon to give the roar." But what a roar it was.

Man of Culture

Insensitive to music and trite in painterly appreciation (preferring chocolate boxes to Graham Sutherland), he was yet, in a way that few public figures can claim to be, a man of culture. He relaxed with Edward Gibbon, not Ian Fleming. If Sir Gerald Kelly exaggerated in describing his oil of a snow scene at Chartwell as the greatest English painting of this century, and if his feats with a bricklayer's trowel were amplified by Smith Square, he represented a tradition of creative hobbies now yielding to the paralytic cult of the goggle-box.

To the many thousands along the funeral route and the nameless millions who followed television and radio commentaries, on steppe and prairie, in desert and jungle, he was the Great Commoner. They forgot his aristocratic connections, and remembered how, almost unique among the War Cabinet, he had declined elevation to the Lords. Impulsive, often irrational, alternating between insensitivity and sentimentality, blowing up into sudden squalls, subsiding into genial calms, mispronouncing "Nazis" and doing badly at school, he was the common man writ large. Though not consciously ambitious like him, unconsciously they identified with the Cinderella story of the mediocre schoolboy who made good as a man, of the middle-aged failure who triumphed in old age. They identified too with the St. George of the Garter, who might run before big rats in the ratrace, but stood his ground when a dragon was in the path. They didn't care whether he was given a salute of 17 or 19 guns, or whether the Queen created a precedent by attending his funeral.

Finest Hour

For the English it was an especially moving occasion. Truly 1940 was "their finest hour". For the last time Britain almost, if not really, ruled the waves, but in a sense unassociated with the gunboat imperialism of former centuries. It was the coinciding crest of two waves that often swell in opposition—power and glory. There was something like it in 1815, whose hero enjoyed the first great non-royal state funeral of 1852. But whereas Napoleon represented oppression with reform, Hitler represented oppression with barbarism.

In the Freethought-Humanist movement we often criticise English society. We are right to do so. We disagree with the platform of the ecclesiastical Establishment, and "the function of an Opposition is," as Lord Randolph Churchill observed, "to oppose". Such labour is a public service. Complacency is the besetting national sin. There is no lack of ability. Were industry organised as efficiently as the state funeral, there would be no economic crisis. But it is fitting to pay tribute too.

At the time of the Algerian war there was lively multinational discussion in my Greek barber's one day about the shortcomings of the English. Suddenly an Algerian intervened, slowly and calmly: "You can say what you like, but you live longest in England". The disputation died away. We must never forget that when Karl Marx had been ignominiously ejected from most of the capitals of Europe he was afforded sanctuary in the British Museum to plot the downfall of the ruling classes. There are injustices here that need a National Council for Civil Liberties or an ombudsman. But there are great freedoms too. I like to think that statesmen of the world gathered round Churchill's coffin to salute English freedom, very far from perfect, but a damned sight better than in most of their own countries. It may sound corny, but it's not such a small thing.

THE CHURCHES IN POLITICS

THE Churches must face the fact that their faith is irrelevant to very large masses of the less privileged in Scotland, said the Right Rev. Dr. Kenneth M. Carey, Bishop of the Edinburgh diocese of the Episcopal Church. And, the Bishop added, "if we are realistic, we have got to face the fact that the world as a whole thinks that the gospel as preached and practised by the Churches today is almost totally irrelevant to its hopes and dreams and desires" (*The Glasgow Herald*, 5/2/65). Christians—and the Churches—should therefore be involved in, and care passionately about politics. They should point out that the Old Testament was "crammed with politics".

It seemed, from the parliamentary debate on the Teaching (Scotland) Bill on February 4th, that the Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic Churches need no encouragement from an Episcopalian bishop to be involved in politics. Mrs. Judith Hart, Joint Under Secretary of State for Scotland, winding up the debate, reported that the Secretary of State had had representations that the two Churches should be assured of places on the proposed Teaching Council (*The Scotsman*, 5/2/65). Mr. Michael Noble (Conservative, Argyll) had said that if no Government statement was forthcoming the Opposition would seek to amend the Bill in its later stages. Mrs. Hart duly promised that an amendment would be introduced during the committee stage. The six members of the council to be nominated by the Secretary of State would "take account" of the two Churches. This—as the *Scotsman* suggested—indicated a change in Government attitude. For on February 2nd, the Scottish Secretary himself, Mr. William Ross, had hoped that "people who become members of the council will not be representatives or delegates".

The only consolation is that, in some respects at any rate, the two Churches are likely to cancel each other out.

ZIP OR ZIPPER?

THE other night, here in Canada, an English friend and myself were having one of those silly conversations centering around the alternatives of English versus American linguistic usage. The relative merits of "lift" versus "elevator", "petrol" versus "gasoline" finally degenerated to a consideration of "trousers" versus "pants" which sparked the even more trivial "zip" versus "zipper". I had always assumed that there was no little onomatopoeia behind the etymology of this word but on this point I was at a tremendous disadvantage for by some great coincidence my friend was one of the engineers responsible for the design of this fastener which was at one time not, named satisfactorily. I do not need to remind anyone how the success or failure of a new product very often depends on its name so that you can imagine the interest my friend took in this aspect of his problem. He went on to tell me how he once let a clergyman demonstrate the new fastener in private by trying on a pair of trousers fitted with this device that was destined to replace buttons for many purposes. The clergyman was, of course, a novice and understandably botched his only attempt at closure but not without some pain as was evident from his sharp cry of surprise. After a hasty reflection he asked with a wince, "What kind of Zipporah is this?" (cf Exodus 4, 25) whereupon my engineer friend (who is slightly hard-of-hearing) exclaimed, "Zipper did you say? That's it!"

Well, there you have it, the origin of the word "zipper".
D. M. CHAPMAN

Are Science and Religion Compatible?

By D. A. RICKARDS

WHAT do the terms science, religion, and compatibility really mean? Let us begin with definitions. The word compatible means to co-exist in harmony or to be non-contradictory.¹ The word science means knowledge, based upon a detailed study and testing of nature. The methods used in science consist of making controlled observations and the knowledge gained from experience and experiment is used to describe, explain or predict the event in question. The object of all science is to co-ordinate our experiences and bring them into a logical system.² Science is interested in truth—but what is truth? Truth consists of an accurate report and nothing more. It is the complete description of a particular event in time and space. Science seeks the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It does *not* lie for the glory of some ancient fable—it does not twist its results to suit some political group. It lets the observations speak for themselves.

A scientific theory is governed by the law of parsimony and all that this means is that there must be no extra trimmings—the plain simple facts are enough. In the words of the astronomer, Laplace, “there is no need for [God] in the hypothesis.”³

Scientific belief differs greatly from religious belief. The belief of a physicist in Einstein's relativity; or the belief of a biologist in Darwinism is based on probability, it is acceptable only as long as it is satisfactory and until a better or more complete concept comes into existence. It is never believed in dogmatically as an absolute truth. Scientists are not bound to believe what other scientists believe and no scientific theory is beyond challenge and improvement. To science doubt is the beginning of knowledge. To scientists, doubt is the beginning of wisdom. Next we must define religion.

Literally, the word religion means “fear of the gods”. But it originated from two other words: “re” meaning “again”, and “ligere”—to tie. Hence the word religion means to hold back or to be tied down⁴, to a set of beliefs or dogmas. There are a great number of religions in the world, but our discussion will be confined to those found in the Bible—namely Judaism and Christianity. A belief in either of these involves an all powerful God (Jehovah) who created the universe and everything in it. The various books of the Old Testament relate the experiences and customs of the Jews. The New Testament describes the foundation of Christianity for which Jehovah sent his only son to earth in human form to save mankind for sin!

As in so many other mythologies, the son of God was born to a virgin; led a miracle-filled life, raised the dead, cured the sick and finally was killed. However, he came back to life and after a trip to hell, he ascended in glory to be seated on a throne at his Father's side. We are told that all who believe will be saved, while unbelievers will burn for ever and ever.⁵ The key word in religion is “fear”—the fear of punishment, fear of death, fear of God. In the book of Psalms we read that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and in Proverbs comes the verse—the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.⁶

There is not time to discuss religion in detail, but one way of assessing its real value is by reviewing the effect which it has had on men and nations. As the saying goes—by their fruits ye shall know them.⁷

We must review the history of science and religion and ask ourselves, in all honesty, have they been truly compatible? It is inconceivable that anyone could seriously

say yes, because when religion flourished, science declined. And as the boundaries of science were widened, the domain of religion was narrowed. Not only was religion incompatible with every branch of scientific work, it was actively opposed to all scientific progress. The conflict between theology and science was the conflict between authority and observation.⁸

The attitude of St. Augustine in the 4th century (350-430 AD) was typical of the early Church Fathers. It went like this: “Nothing is to be accepted save on the authority of scripture, since greater is that authority than all the powers of the human mind.”⁹ Can you imagine the stifling effect which this doctrine exerted upon science? The Bible was divinely inspired and everything that man could need to know was to be found within its contents. So why study the stars? Why study disease? Why study the earth when it's all in God's book?

Were religion and science ever compatible in any field? The answer is no. Look at the history of medicine and you find that the religious theory of disease was based on magic. It varied between divine wrath on one hand, and satanical intervention on the other. Treatment consisted of appeasing God and insulting the devil. Great faith was placed in the use of holy water and fetishes such as the bones of dead saints. Demons were expelled by special incantations. The Churches always considered themselves better informed than the physicians.

Do you call this compatibility?

Take astronomy. Religion said that the earth was flat and stationary in the centre of the universe. Heaven was above the earth and hell beneath it. It was a sin to believe that the world was round or that anyone could live on the other side of it.¹⁰ Astronomers agreed with the Church or bore the consequences, and under such conditions, Christianity failed to produce a worthwhile astronomer for 1500 years!

Even when Copernicus rediscovered¹¹ the truth about the solar system, he was afraid to publish his opinions until he was on his deathbed.¹² Galileo also knew the truth—he knew that the earth revolved around the sun but he was forced to recant. Why? Because such an idea was contrary to the scriptures! What kind of compatibility do you call this? Take geology and you will find that it was shackled to the Bible for 1700 years.¹³ Earthquakes were the will of God and everything had to conform with a world which was created in 4004 BC! Take biology—you will see that it was impossible for real progress to be made until Darwin and Wallace broke away from the absurdities of special creation in Genesis and explained the origin of species on the basis of evolution. Take meteorology—you will find that the Churches knew all about the electrical storms which toppled their steeples and ruined their places of worship. These were the devil's works. They could not be prevented but they could be lessened by the use of holy water, bell ringing, special prayers and occasional witch burning. It took Benjamin Franklin—the infidel—to invent a lightning rod which could protect a church from both the wickedness of Satan and the wrath of God!

What caused this religious fanaticism which drove men to persecute their enemies rather than to persuade them? What made the true believers so intolerant? What else but the pseudo-morality which abounded in their holy books? The God of the Old Testament was bloodthirsty

(Concluded on page 60)

This Believing World

As some readers may have noticed during the funeral week of Winston Churchill, most, if not all, the writers of the tributes to his life and work woke up to the fact that he never, or very rarely, referred to Jesus or to God, and certainly never to Bible miracles as of any help whatever in his long life. It is true that the *Sunday Express* (January 31st) had a page article headed "When Sir Winston spoke about God and Heaven," but only at the end of the third column were we told about his "dissertation on God, the world, and the hereafter," without any hint of Jesus, or any real details of what the dissertation said.

★

In fact, the only other references are: "I wonder what God thinks of the things his creatures have invented?"; and "When I get to heaven I mean to spend a considerable portion of my first million years in painting . . .". There is nothing else in the 24 extracts from his own words" given by the *Observer* (January 31st).

★

Why was Churchill so reticent about clearly expressing his belief? Obviously, because he could find no evidence of any part played by God in the affairs of the world. Also perhaps because he had read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* three times. One need only read Gibbon once to see that that master of history had demolished Christianity as a divine religion once for all.

★

Alas, a distressing disclosure unearthed by *Psychic News* (February 6th) has dislodged Mrs. Jeane Dixon from her throne from being the first seer or prophetess who foresaw the murder of President Kennedy. She was apparently preceded by a Miss Taylor Caldwell who actually "saw it in detail" months before it occurred. The President was of course told and ignored it. She published the prophecy "weeks" before it happened, as did other newspapers, one of which was called *The Wanderer*.

★

Miss Caldwell has two other distinctions—she is a "famous author" and "a natural psychic" as she told *Psychic News* herself. One of her books is about Ghengis Khan, about whom she knew literally nothing. Yet her book is absolutely accurate in every detail. All her dreams always come true, for her grandmother was Irish and used to tell her as a child she was "fey". What a pity that Mrs. Dixon and Miss Caldwell cannot give us the name of the next Derby winner!

★

The writer of the London "Evening News" "Saturday Reflection" (January 23rd) not being able to connect Winston Churchill to God in all his travels, left him severely alone, and turned to the wonderful adventures of Paul as detailed in Acts—which is quite as much a work of fiction as Esther. Paul "was a deeply religious man" (which was more than could be said of Churchill) so we got a "reflection" about him, written with evangelical enthusiasm, though the two accounts of Paul's "missionary travels" (in Acts and the Epistles) contradict each other in nearly every detail. Still, thank God, both are divinely inspired.

★

How often we read about a perfectly honest person becoming an impudent thief and, when caught, immediately "passing the buck" to the Christian devil. We hold no brief for this long-living and happy gentleman, but we decline to believe he is always to blame for somebody else becoming a thief. Here we have a Mr. Fambegbe, a postman,

stealing £238 from Littlewoods, and then indignantly claiming that he wasn't to blame but "the devil inside him". The magistrate declined to blame the devil, however, and the postman got three months.

ARE SCIENCE AND RELIGION COMPATIBLE?

(Concluded from page 59)

and barbaric.¹⁴ His son in the New Testament predicted an early end to the world and threatened his enemies with torture and eternal damnation.¹⁵ Is it any wonder that beliefs like these encouraged the Church and its followers to act as badly to those who disagreed with them in this world, as their God promised that he would do to his enemies in the next world.

Some people try to differentiate between religion and the Church. Religion was good, they say, but the Churches were bad. Don't you believe it. The Judaeo-Christian religion made the Churches what they were and the Churches with all their intolerance were firmly based on religious principles. Another thing which must be made clear is that the Roman Catholic Church was no worse than any other religious group. Luther called Copernicus an upstart astrologer and a fool! Calvin preferred to believe that the earth could not be moved and quoted the 93rd Psalm¹⁶ and Wesley thought that it was preferable to give up his belief in the Bible than his belief in witchcraft!¹⁷ It would be easy to continue to give examples but the time has come when we should ask ourselves—why on earth did the Churches change their point of view? Was it because they realised that their existence was threatened and that their future was at stake? Or did they get a new revelation from God?

To be sure, Christianity no longer persecutes the scientist. No more are heretics burned at the stake, no more can witches be tortured. We have reached the age of compatibility! Ministers, priests and rabbis are still arrayed like Solomon in all his glory. They are still called upon to give their blessings and invocations but in reality, they have become like the legendary emperor—they have no clothes. The Church was faced with compatibility or extinction. It is understandable that it preferred compatibility.

1. Webster's Dictionary—second edition.
2. A paraphrasing of definitions by Bertrand Russell, Werner Heisenberg, A. J. Carlson and Albert Einstein.
3. Quoted from Bertrand Russell, *Religion and Science*, p.58.
4. Webster's Dictionary—second edition.
5. Mark 16, 16, etc.
6. Psalms 111, 10; Proverbs 1, 7; Proverbs 9, 10.
7. Matt. 7, 20.
8. Bertrand Russell, *Religion and Science*, p.16.
9. St. Augustine. *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*—Book 2, Chap. 5.
10. Migne—*Patrologia*—Vol. VI, p.426.
11. Aristarchus of Samos had described the solar system correctly in c.250 BC.
12. *Revolutions of Heavenly Bodies* (1543).
13. A. D. White, *History of the Warfare between Science and Theology*, Vol. I p.209-248.
14. Numbers 31; Joshua 10, 40, etc.
15. Matt. 25, 41; Luke 19, 27, etc.
16. Quoted in Bertrand Russell's *Religion and Science* p.23.
17. Wesley's *Journal*, 1768.

WITHOUT COMMENT

Religion and Humanism

Ronald Hepburn, David Jenkins, Ninian Smart, Howard Root, Renford Bamborough

Distinguished philosophers and theologians discuss questions of the gospel and logic, the functions of religious language and its relation to truth, the possibility of religious reconstructions and of what common ground may exist between Christians and Humanists.—BBC Publications advert (*New Statesman*, 8/1/65).

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street,) Sunday Evenings

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Ascension Church Hall, Malwood Road, London, S.W.12, Sunday, February 21st, 8 p.m.: Debate "That Religious Instruction and Worship should not take place in State schools", MARGARET McILROY and CANON H. G. OCKWELL.

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, February 21st, 6.45 p.m.: C. BLYTH, Subject to be announced.

Bristol Humanist Group (Kelmescott, 4 Portland Street, Clifton), Sunday, February 21st, 7.30 p.m.: R. HUSSEY, "Factor Farming—For and against".

Dundee Humanist Group, (College of Education), Wednesday, February 24th, 7.30 p.m.: MRS. SAGGAR and E. G. MACFARLANE, "The Teaching of Sex".

Leicester Secular Society, (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, February 21st, 6.30 p.m.: Professor HYMAN LEVY, "The Political Role of Religion".

South Place Ethical Society, (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday February 21st, 11 a.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM, "Is Existentialism a Humanism?" Tuesday, February 23rd, 7.30 p.m.: H. C. CREIGHTON, "Cultural Relations with the USSR".

Surbiton and Malden & Coombe and Kingston Branches NSS (The White Hart, Kingston Bridge, Hampton Wick), Friday, February 19th, 8 p.m. A meeting.

Notes and News

THE 59th Annual Dinner of the National Secular Society will be held at the Horse Shoe Hotel, Tottenham Court Road, London, W.1, on Saturday, March 20th. The President, Mr. David Tribe, will be in the chair, and the Guest of Honour will be Mr. Leo Abse, MP, well known to readers for his work for divorce law reform. The toast to the Society will be proposed by Mr. Peter Cotes, the theatrical producer, and Mr. W. Miller, Chairman of the Birmingham Branch will respond. Tickets, price 22s. 6d., are now available from the Secretary, NSS, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

THE outspoken American Catholic magazine *Ramparts*, contained (in its November 1964 issue) a damning attack on Cardinal James Francis McIntyre of Los Angeles, whom it compared with Senator Goldwater. The Senator thought he could "reinstale *laissez-faire*"; the Cardinal thought he could "perpetuate sixteenth-century religious precepts". Senator and Cardinal would treat Communists with "appropriate firmness", the former by "atomising them" and the latter by "anathematising them". And neither man, *Ramparts* said, cared for the masses of the dispossessed. Indeed, it was "no coincidence" that Goldwater forces dominated the Southern California political scene. As leader of one and a half million Catholics, Cardinal McIntyre's deliberate refusal to speak out on the racial question, "his support of the John Birch Society, as well as his newspaper's constant hate-communism campaign have, *Ramparts* maintained, "directly aided those forces that make up the Goldwater philosophy". It is encouraging to know that, on November 3rd, that philosophy was overwhelmingly rejected by the American people.

POPE PAUL's first encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, also revealed a "sixteenth-century mentality", according to *Ramparts*, which had looked in vain for an extension of "the horizons set up by Pope John" in *Pacem in Terris*. Pope Paul had "raised liberal hopes with his opening address to the second session of the Vatican Council", but then "somehow, and in an almost mysterious way, something happened". For "some inexplicable reason" the chapters on religious liberty and the Jews were not brought to a vote. "Many were convinced," *Ramparts* said, "that an international stall was taking place". *Ecclesiam Suam* explained where Pope Paul stood "in all of this". It proved "the despair of those who truly believe in *aggiornamento*, while at the same time allowing men like Cardinal Ottaviani to sleep, untroubled by dreams".

"OH, it is neither pride nor presumption nor obstinacy nor folly but a luminous certitude and our joyous conviction that we are indeed living members of the Body of Christ, that we are the authentic heirs of the Gospel of Christ, those who truly continue the work of the Apostles. There dwells in us the great inheritance of truth and morality characterising the Catholic Church, which today possesses intact the living heritage of the original apostolic tradition". This passage from *Ecclesiam Suam* can be said "to delineate Pope Paul's thinking," said *Ramparts*. And if one were to read the encyclical "in splendid isolation from reality", one would "never suspect for a moment there were such places as Spain or Latin American . . .". One would come away, *Ramparts* added, ignorant of the fact that the Church in America "has been disastrously derelict in the matter of racial justice and his failed completely to declare itself on the barbarism of nuclear war."

"ROME is not just any city. It is the See of the papacy. It is a sacred city. To perform this play here is a grave insulting and inadmissible provocation." The play is, of course, Rolf Hochhuth's *The Representative*; the paper quoted is *Il Tempo*. Another paper, the neo-Fascist *Il Secolo* urged that the play be stopped "by all means available". And stopped it was, though attendance was to be by membership or invitation. Rome police, acting on "orders from above", marched on to the stage during the press preview and ordered the critics to leave. Those who hesitated "were carried forcibly from the theatre" reported the *Guardian's* correspondent George Armstrong, and two "unco-operative" members of the audience were charged with participating in a "seditious gathering".

Martin Heidegger on Death

By R. SMITH

THE "dying of others" says Heidegger, in his famous *Sein und Zeit*, is seen often enough as a social inconvenience, if not even downright tactlessness, against which the public is to be guarded. "The 'the' does not permit us the courage for anxiety in the face of death," he says. Thinking about death is regarded by the public as cowardly fear, a sign of insecurity on the part of *Dasein*, and a sombre way of fleeing from the world.

Heidegger's technical expression for man is *Dasein*, which means literally "being there". According to him the existential interpretation of death takes precedence over any biology and ontology of life. Methodologically, the existential analysis is superordinate to the questions of a biology, psychology, theodicy, or theology of death. In the inauthentic flight from death we hear death treated with indifference. Depersonalising death by reducing it to an abstract and universal category, and refusing to recognise it as something oneself must undergo. In Leo Tolstoy's story "The Death of Ivan Ilych", which Heidegger refers to, we get a literary representation of what Heidegger is getting at in relation to man's indifference to man in his anxiety towards death.

When Ivan develops certain bodily symptoms he becomes very anxious and finally decides to see a doctor. "To Ivan Ilych only one question was important; was his case serious or not?" But the doctor ignored that inappropriate question. From his point of view it was not the one under consideration. It was not a question of Ivan Ilych's life or death; the real question was to decide between a floating kidney, chronic catarrh, or appendicitis. And that question the doctor solved—brilliantly as it seemed to Ivan Ilych—in favour of appendicitis, with the reservation that should an examination of the urine give fresh indications the matter would be reconsidered. All this was just what Ivan Ilych had himself brilliantly accomplished a thousand times in dealing with men on trial. The doctor summed up brilliantly, looking over his spectacles triumphantly and even gaily at the accused. From the summing up Ivan concluded that things were bad; bad for him; for the doctor and perhaps for everybody else, a matter of indifference. And this conclusion struck him painfully, arousing in him a great feeling of pity for himself and of bitterness toward the doctor's indifference to a matter of such importance.

He said nothing of this, but rose, placed the doctor's fee on the table, and remarked with a sigh, "We sick people probably often put inappropriate questions but tell me, in general, is this complaint dangerous or not . . . ?" The doctor looked at him sternly over his spectacles with one eye, as if to say: "Prisoner, if you will not keep to the questions put to you, I shall be obliged to have you removed from the court . . . I have already told you what I consider necessary and proper. The analysis may show more." And the doctor bowed.

Yet prior to these symptoms Tolstoy's Ivan Ilych's attitude to death was no different from that of the doctor's. Death for him was a matter of indifference, a biological or universal social category. But this indifference to death, plus its concealment, was immediately swept away when he was forced to consider his own death. Like us all, Ivan Ilych knew about the certainty of death, but it was not until now that he had become authentically certain of his own.

The inauthentic fleeing from death according to

Heidegger is in publicness, fallenness, idle talk, and gossip. Idle talk is always ambiguous about death. It is not authentically discussed or explained: it is rather concealed. "This evasive concealment in the face of death dominates everydayness so stubbornly," Heidegger says, "that in being with one another the 'neighbours' often keep talking the dying person into the belief that he will escape death and soon return to the tranquilised everydayness of the world of his concern." This concealment is witnessed in the everydayness of *Dasein*. "One of these days one will die too, in the end, but right now it has nothing to do with us."

The existential view of death is much different from that held by the ordinary man and the traditional philosopher. Death is a great theme for existentialists, although Heidegger did not claim to be an existentialist. Schopenhauer says, "Death is the true inspiring genius, the muse of philosophy." Existentialists all seem to agree with this. However other philosophies have given death a back seat. Epicurus said that death does not concern us—with the explanation that "when we are, death is not". And Spinoza said, "A free man thinks of nothing less than death, and his wisdom is not a meditation upon death but upon life." The Stoic also looked upon death with great indifference, and Christianity has a lot in common with the Stoic view.

Whatever one may think about these traditional views on death, they are easily seen to be quite superficial and fall into insignificance when seen from the profound analysis of death given by Heidegger. According to Heidegger we neither can nor should shut out the consciousness of death or refuse the anguish and despair which the consciousness of death entails. Even the Christian existentialists regard the despair of the atheist existentialist as more authentic than the Christian who has allowed the belief in heaven to blind him to the tragedy of human conditions.

The existentialia are, according to Heidegger, ontological necessities of the human condition from which no one can possibly escape, but in the state of fallenness (*Verfallenheit*) or inauthentically they become degraded. In this mode of being our attitude is determined by habit, or a vague sense of what is required of us by *das Man*, which is often translated as the "one", the "public" or the anonymous "they".

One says, "Death certainly comes but not right away". With this "but", "they" deny that death is certain. "Not right away" is not a purely negative assertion, but a way in which the "they" interprets itself. The authentic man according to Heidegger is he who has escaped from the banality of everydayness, by recognising and facing up to death authentically.

In Heidegger's analysis of death there is no room for life after death. In that sense he is an atheist, as well as being a first class philosopher. However, he is not a philosopher for the squeamish, especially those people who jump down your throat when you start talking seriously about the question of death.

COMMENT ON THE ABOVE

I AM sure that R. Smith, as a regular critic of FREETHINKER contributors, will not mind a few criticisms of his own article.

I am not, so far as I am aware, "squeamish" about death. Nor, I think, are most Freethinkers. They can and

do discuss their own deaths rationally and make what provisions they can for their dependants. I don't exactly know what is meant by "recognising and facing up to death authentically", but I do know from considerable experience that Freethinkers generally face up to it realistically.

Consciousness of death need not, however, entail anguish and despair, as Mr. Smith and his mentor assert. And it is quite invalid to label an Epicurean or a Spinozan view of death "superficial", as opposed to the "profound analysis" of Heidegger. The contrast is not so "easily seen" as Mr. Smith thinks.

Spinoza was surely right in regarding wisdom as a meditation of life, not of death. "A free man," he wrote in the *Ethics*, "that is, one who lives according to the dictate of reason alone, is not led by the fear of death, but directly desires what is good, that is, to act, to live, and preserve his being on the basis of seeking what is useful to him. And therefore he thinks of nothing less than of death, but his wisdom is a meditation of life."

Wisdom, I take it, means worldly wisdom and one learns worldly wisdom from living not dying. Indeed, one can, by the nature of things, learn nothing whatever from dying. One just dies. Before this, however, one has had to live, to grapple with problems, "seeking what is useful" to oneself. The free man thinks of nothing less than death because he is occupied with the business of living. But this doesn't mean that he is unaware of death or afraid to face it, as Mr. Smith seems to think.

Mr. Smith's—and Heidegger's—mistake is to treat death as the fact, when it is merely a fact along with many others. Certainly the fact that we shall die is no more "significant" than the fact that we are alive at present. It is we who give significance or profundity to a fact.

Now it so happens that Mr. Smith is pessimistic. To find out how he became so would require knowledge of his life—his upbringing, his trials and tribulations—his condition, that I don't possess. Suffice it to say that, for him, the "evil" of living outweighs the "good": the human lot is tragic. The philosopher—or poet—who appeals to him must, therefore, be a tragedian.

This I can understand—even sympathise with. What I try continually to bring to Mr. Smith's notice is that not all men are as unhappy as he. Nor does this make them "superficial": they are aware of suffering, and have to some extent experienced it, but they have also experienced happiness; their aim, in fact, is to eliminate as much suffering as possible and to replace it with happiness.

COLIN MCCALL

ADVT.

H. F. Haas of 1111 Broughton, NW, Orangeburg, SC 29115, USA, would like to obtain copies of the following, all by John M. Robertson: *The Jesus Problem*, *Christianity and Mythology*, *Pagan Christs*.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY 59th ANNUAL DINNER

Guest of Honour: LEO ABSE, M.P.

at the

Horse Shoe Hotel, Tottenham Court Road, London, W.1.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20th, 1964

RECEPTION 6 p.m. DINNER 6.30 p.m.

Chairman: DAVID TRIBE

Vegetarians catered for Evening Dress Optional
Tickets 22/6 from the Sec., 103 Borough High Street, S.E.1.

The Humanist Letter Network

By KIT MOUAT

THIS Humanist project was started in January 1964, and eighty-six Humanists, Secularists, Freethinkers and Rationalists joined during the first twelve months.

The purpose of the Network is to try and help those who are isolated or who just want to write to others who have rejected the Christian and religious attitude to life. There is no longer any doubt in my mind that such a service is needed. The ages range from 14 to 84. Young men want to write to young women, widows and widowers and those who are cut off by their domestic responsibilities have all welcomed the opportunity to make contact. The encouragement and appreciation I have received have quite made up for the few inevitable failures and problems.

I had expected only Britishers to join, but have been delighted to hear from Humanists from eleven different countries and of thirteen different nationalities. I am now trying to interest the New Zealand and American Rationalist Associations (the Australians have already joined), and am trying to extend the European field from Holland and Germany to Scandinavia and anyone else who is wanting to make friends through such a Network.

In order to join it is necessary to let me know your age, whether or not you are married and to give a brief account of your interests and hobbies. I have been asking for a minimum of 1s. 6d. and a stamped addressed envelope, and have been able as the result of members' generosity to send £2 (plus a specific donation of £5 15s.) to the Agnostics Adoption Society, £1 to the Humanist school in Bechuanaland and cover my expenses. When the postage goes up to 4d. a letter, however, I am going to ask for 2s. from those living in the UK (or on the 4d. postage rate) and 2s. 6d. from those living abroad. Indeed, 1s. 6d. has really not been enough to cover the cost of air mail letters abroad, and, if anyone is interested, the best way of sending small sums is by the International Reply Coupons. I shall be grateful to hear from interested Freethinkers and Humanists who read this, and will try to find them interesting correspondents as soon as possible. Sometimes delay is unavoidable. It depends on the number of people writing in, and unfortunately I am always very short of women.

I have been grateful for help from the Ethical Union office in stencilling and "rolling off". I need as much publicity as I can get, and would like, if possible, to reach potential Humanists as well as British Humanist Association and National Secular Society members. But this is not easy. One non-Humanist magazine did accept an article, but I have just heard that the *London Weekly Advertiser* refuses to accept an advertisement. The reason is intriguing, but perhaps the words "Humanist" and "Secularist" still suggest something worse than unorthodoxy to the ignorant!

Nevertheless, I am sure that during 1965 the Network will develop, and the larger it becomes the easier it is for me and the more choice members will have. I have rejected the suggestion that I should somehow (I don't, in fact, know how) publish lists of people who are available. To some extent the Humanist world is a small and fairly closed circle, and I think that many women are already too timid to write in. If they thought that I might publish even an anonymous description of them, I am afraid none would join at all. For this reason perhaps I have too much control. At any rate I take all the blame, and it must be remembered that with only 86 people of such varying ages and interests there is not very much choice anyway. There may indeed only be two or three people

in the right age group sharing any one interest, while I may find myself with an elderly woman of 82, a boy of 17, one man of 40 who hates music, and one woman of 42 whose passion is opera. It is all very interesting, and after all I am not running a marriage bureau. Not yet, anyway! It has been suggested by one Humanist that I should try. Although I cannot see any possible way in which this could be done I do recognise that it might well provide a valuable service, but if that were ever to happen, there would have to be more Humanist women! At the moment I am afraid they just don't exist. (Anyone who has any ideas as to how we can attract more women, not just to the Network, but to the Humanist-Secular movement as a whole, do let us know. This really is a vital problem.)

In the meantime, if you would like to write to someone who is also a Humanist, do write to me at Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex, with a s.a.e. I will do my best to help I have been encouraged, most of all perhaps, to discover that secularism is an attitude of mind that makes sense to men and women of every possible kind, educated, not-so-educated, high IQs and low, intellectuals and non-intellectuals, professionals and those who work with their hands.

CORRESPONDENCE

BURNS

Mr. R. Smith states that "Burns was in a way a religious man" and quotes two irrelevant verses to support this assertion. But the scathing, searing satire in many of Burns's poems proves quite the opposite, particularly in *Holy Willie's Prayer* which Ingersoll rightly described as "the greatest, sharpest, deadliest, keenest and wittiest thing ever said or written against religion":—

O Thou, who in the Heavens does dwell,
Who, as it pleases best Thyself,
Sends one to Heaven and ten to Hell,
All for Thy glory,
And not for any good or ill,
They've done afore Thee!
I bless and praise Thy matchless might,
When thousands Thou hast left in night,
That I am here afore Thy sight,
For gifts and grace,
A burning and shining light
To all this place . . .

And in a letter to one of his friends on March 7th, 1788, Burns said: "Religious nonsense is the most nonsensical nonsense".

Space forbids further quotation, but his declaration that "twenty times I rather would be an atheist clean, than under gospel colours hid be, just for a screen", shows that Burns was a very long way indeed from being a religious man and that he was, and remained an agnostic up to the day of his death.

WALTER RIDLEY.

DAVID AND SOLOMON

I am always greatly interested to read an article by Mr. H. Cutner, his lucidity and forthrightness are very stimulating. But does he not carry his scepticism a little too far in his "Dr. Zeitlin and Jesus" (22/1/65)? I can grant him Noah, and perhaps Moses, but can he dismiss David or Solomon so lightly as being mythical?

After all we do have contemporary Assyrian evidence for such Judaeans kings as Hezekiah, and Menasseh, they did not just appear as if from nowhere; they must have had several predecessors leading to the founder of the dynasty, known as the Davidic.

Also the remains of stables found at Megidah which many scholars place in the 10th century, and attribute to Solomon (for, the book of Kings says, Solomon had many horses) though it is quite likely that they belong to the following century and were built by King Ahab.

Still, it would be of interest to know which of the Old Testament characters Mr. Cutner does consider historical, and why.

"BEN-YEHUDAH"

FAMILY PRESERVATION BILL

The Parliamentary machine is working on the nonsensical Family Preservation Bill. The 500 Exclusive Brethren who attended the House on Friday, February 5th, must have been disappointed when the Bill was not debated. (It couldn't get a second reading.) They have no cause to worry; Parliamentary democracy will kick the Bill about until it gets lost. A pity; we would love the debate.

C. FRANKLIN.

OBITUARY

The death of Stewart Martin Caines, President of Wales and Western Branch of the National Secular Society, on February 6th, brought to an end a long and very painful illness, which he bore with quite remarkable fortitude. Our heartfelt condolences go to his wife, Suzanne, who attended him with devotion, and to his children of five and three.

Born in British Guiana, Martin Caines came to this country in wartime and served with the RAF. He was later a commercial artist, but resigned to become warden of the Bute Town Community Centre in Cardiff's Tiger Bay, and was respected both inside and outside the coloured community. Indeed, although a militant Freethinker, with a scorn for things religious, Martin's amiability was such that religionists rarely retained ill-humour at his searching criticisms, and he was a man without enemies.

Employed as he was, by the Cardiff Education Department, he never shrank from public declaration of his secularist outlook. He was a popular speaker, especially commanding on outdoor platforms. He was the first Freethinker I met in Wales, and I made no better friend.

DAVE SHIPPER.

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The Freethinker

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READERS of ecclesiastical news in the press, whether at the level of the national dailies or of the smallest local paper, can hardly be unaware that there was recently a week of prayer for Christian reunion. Again and again, we have been informed that Anglicans and Methodists are preparing the way for a merger. Joint services are the order of the day. Even the hitherto exclusive Roman Catholic Church has been well to the fore. Roman Catholic priests have spoken at non-Roman churches. Meetings have been addressed on Anglican premises by Fr. Corbishey, SJ and others. Some Roman Catholics, as in Croydon, have put on services especially designed for the attendance of their non-Roman neighbours. From whatever point of view the whole subject be approached, it is clear that at the social level, future considerations must be with the Churches as a single local group rather than with a series of separate denominations. Old sayings that unity is strength come to mind and lead the freethinker to ponder. A unified grouping of this kind could exercise far greater political pressure than could a number of separate units, themselves parted by internal antagonisms. If the present wave of unity continues, ecclesiastical action, especially at the local government level, may recover not a little of its potency.

Roman Catholic Church

At first sight, it is difficult to see what is happening or to understand its implications. There would seem to have been little unsaying of past doctrinal divisions. The Roman Catholic Church has made various changes as a result of the present Vatican Council. One or two cardinals have made relatively liberal theological speeches. But none of the so-called reforms go to the roots of doctrine. With regard to the mass, it is the essential doctrinal teaching underlying the rite which matters. It cannot matter finally whether the rite be carried out in Latin or in English. Clerical celibacy is nothing more nor less than a mere matter of discipline. Any projected reform leaves the Roman Catholic Church as sacerdotal in conception as it ever was. There are no signs whatever that it is yielding to the inroads of modern biblical scholarship. Even the much-discussed *Objections to Catholicism* appears to be little more than *jeu d'esprit*. The Roman Catholic Church has a long history of reform and self-criticism. Both the medieval Conciliar movement and the sixteenth century Counter-Reformation will spring to mind. Paul V, as pope of the Counter-Reformation, was to the fore in purging away the secularising influences of the Renaissance. But each reforming movement has left the doctrinal basis consolidated and clarified. There is not the least sign that, at the present time, the decrees of the Council of Trent will be undone. On the contrary, it may well be that they will be strengthened in all essential matters.

Nonconformists

Nonconformity has clearly been losing ground for several generations. It was essentially the creed of the Victorian middle-classes and, as a result of the evangelical revival,

attained a new impetus. Its forms of church government provided a natural alliance with liberalism in politics. An individualist ethic of salvation fitted in well with the individualism of the contemporary social and economic scene. The same type of mind which had produced the nineteenth century stress upon thrift extended itself to such questions as gambling, teetotalism and their natural weapon of Sunday observance. Hence, the chapel-goer

adopted a negative attitude towards these matters quite unknown to the Roman Catholic Church which, as Dean Inge once remarked, had far too long a heritage of mental culture to fall into snags of this type. But these moral demands became articles of faith to the

Methodist or the Baptist. It would be interesting to know whether they have been put to the fore in the present crusade for unity any more than, on the same occasions, nonconformist lips have been unsealed and have proclaimed the four centuries of Protestant witness against sacramentalism and sacerdotalism. Perhaps it is not ungenerous to imagine that these would prove to be embarrassing topics at a meeting or service devoted to denominational reunion.

Church of England

In the same way, one imagines that the Anglican representative at any such gathering has not had his peace of mind violently disturbed by reference to the ejected Puritan ministers of 1662. He himself represents a position of compromise. On the one hand, his Church has retained many of the traditional forms as well as the manner of episcopal government. He likes to think, with a doubtful historical accuracy, of the continuity of his Church with that of the Middle Ages, and to claim that it is he who really represents the Catholic Church in England. A close relationship with the state has bound him up with existing social orders. His ethics have become assimilated to the progress of industrial capitalism and embodied into a somewhat romantic Toryism in politics. Doctrinally, he belongs to a Church which has tolerated a wide compromise in these matters. It contains those whose views are indistinguishable generally from Roman Catholicism. But it also contains a diminishing wing who represent an Elizabethan version of the doctrines springing forth from the Geneva of John Calvin. Again, it contains likewise the Bishop of Woolwich and the heirs of an extreme modernism which the Roman Catholic Church has rejected by papal decree. For the Anglican, the ethical and anti-sacerdotal enthusiasms of the Protestant must be distasteful. They reveal a crudity of approach and are set within an unaesthetic ugliness which will jar on his sensitivities. In the same way, the Roman Catholic Church is both foreign and Irish. To him, it is an unknown territory which his forefathers rejected.

Divergencies

At first sight, it is difficult to understand what has brought these widely divergent groupings together at the parochial level. Their votaries would like it to be believed

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Reunion All Round

By F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

that the feeling for unity springs from nothing less than a contemporary recognition of a common Christianity. But, in fact, they have had some centuries in which to attain this realisation and have failed to do so, a difficult problem despite the claims of the believer. Indeed, a glance at their divergencies may well suggest that the common Christianity is a very wide generalisation and that, when details come to be considered, the divergencies themselves almost suggest different religions. It is difficult to accept the assurance of the devotees, and explanations have to be sought elsewhere. Clearly, the social and economic fields provide the necessary answers.

Secular Progress

It has not been too good a time for the Churches. Secularity has more and more pervaded common life in a variety of spheres. There has been a drifting away, and a tendency to disregard the various ecclesiastical demands made upon the social order. Even in such matters as divorce law reform or state educational organisation, secularity can record at least some marks of progress. Non-conformity has withered away. It no longer counts for the vast majority of the population and its Puritan ethic has become something generally disregarded. Its story has been one of recession, whilst its historical identification with the Liberal Party in politics has become something of a popular embarrassment in recent years. The Church of England has been forced to record falling numbers and a lessening grip upon the population, although it has been buttressed by very considerable financial resources and the many benefits of state establishment. It has been these factors which have made it a powerful social force and have led nonconformist eyes to look enviously upon the prospects of reunion.

Catholic Influence in Education

At the same time, the Roman Catholic Church has undergone a large increase in numbers. It may be that its aim for the conversion of England is as distant as ever, so far as English people are concerned, and that the newly acquired recruits are drawn from the swollen ranks of Irish and Continental immigrants. But it must never be forgotten that these elements become speedily assimilated into the social system. They become voters with the full rights of citizens, and the Roman Catholic influence is extended thereby within the social sphere. It must indeed have been worm and gallwood to the Anglican episcopate in recent years to find their personal influence within state education diminishing just as a new influence, the Roman Catholic hierarchy, was beginning to make its weight felt in this very field.

Vested Interests

Within such circumstances, each has something to gain from the existing strength of the other. Anglican and Non-conformist alike can probably sit lightly to doctrine if it be social and economic interests which are in peril. Some sort of merger or take-over bid is the obvious twentieth century answer to the problem and it is this which is now taking place. But it is this fact which should lead the freethinker to look with concern upon the present situation. From an organisational viewpoint, his movement is small and divided. All that he says about the discrediting of theology may well be true, yet it may be the theological institutions which will beat him by sheer force of numbers and social pressure. They have by-passed biblical criticism and they will as assuredly by-pass any other intellectual problem which arises, even—as the *Honest to God* controversy has shown—the nature of theism itself. But they will stand as institutions representing vested interests in church and state.

The vital battles of the future will not only take place in

the study but in Parliament, in the local council chamber or on the hustings themselves. A freethought movement, aware of the underlying motivations in present-day movements towards ecclesiastical reunion, must be ready to challenge at each of these levels. In fact, its activities must cut far deeper than the very desirable attainment of a wider publicity for the freethought viewpoint. The next vital step is the building up of a movement socially operative and capable of meeting the Churches in their new sphere of reunited activity. Unless it can do this, it may well fail. But, if it can succeed, it may find that it has struck a vital blow, and that the age of rationality and tolerance is not too far away. The issue is not only a battle of belief, it is a clash of social interest; and it is to this end that an emerging freethought movement must now bend its activities in terms of a disinterested service which can alone bring it success.

The Seal of Confession

By NAN FLANAGAN

SOME people apparently still believe in the seal of confession. I'd like to tell you a few of my experiences of this matter. I was a Catholic till I was twenty-seven and my experience was that the priest broke the seal of confession very easily.

When teaching at Hackney Catholic school I used to take a poor child home with me for the weekend. I soon realised that the headmistress was receiving weekly information of my "misdemeanours". I said to the child who was last with me, "Have you told anyone that we didn't go to mass on Sunday and that I had a boy friend who visited me on Saturday and Sunday?" "I only told the priest in confession and he couldn't repeat it as he forgets everything you tell him immediately", I'll never forget the child's face when I told her what had been happening.

When I was twenty-three, I fell in love. My marriage was opposed by my family because the boy was a Protestant. When I went to confession, I saw at once from the questions the priest asked me that my mother and eldest sister had been before me.

A gardener I knew in Madeira, working for three shillings a day, stole six bananas for his hungry children. As his conscience was pricking him, he confessed to the priest. His master sacked him the next day. A girl I knew there told me that when she became pregnant she confessed to the priest, said her penance, and came out into the road to hear the priest recounting her story to four workmen.

When I was a young girl of sixteen, I went to confession in the convent sacristy. The priest confessing me put his hand inside my blouse and began fondling my breast. I hastily pushed him away and left in distress. Sister who must have been watching from some peephole, caught me and taking me up to my cubicle said: "Strip to the waist, your breasts are developing so much that they are a temptation to the men". She then got a long strip of linen and, winding it round my bosom, flattened my breasts as flat as a pancake. It was instilled into us that if a priest or any man "made free" with us it was our own fault, as we had tempted them. Women were serpents. Years later, I was at an Irish club and a young man said to me, "What lovely breasts you have!" I rushed home for the bandage and hastened to put it on, determined not to be the means of sin to the man.

The Sunday Debate

SIR FRANK SOSKICE, the Home Secretary, moving a resolution to take note of the report of a departmental committee on Sunday observance legislation (the Crathorne Report) in the House of Commons on February 15th, said that laws dating back to 1448 were of little practical application today. The fact was that Sunday observance law was not easy to fit into twentieth-century conditions. The act of 1625 prohibited "meetings, assemblies, or concourses of people out of their parishes on the Lord's Day for any sport or pastime whatsoever." Acts of 1627 and 1677 which prohibited certain forms of travelling and working were also virtually dead letters.

The effective statute which regulated Sunday entertainment and sport was, said the Home Secretary, the Sunday Observance Act, 1780, as amended by the act of 1932. "It is this statute which forbids to this day the opening of public theatres, music, and dance halls, and the holding of sporting events when charges are made for admission."

The departmental committee had recommended that there should be considerable relaxation of the restrictions imposed by the 1780 act. It had proposed that public performances at cinemas and circuses and public dances should be allowed after 12.30 p.m. on Sunday. The same recommendation had been made for sports meetings with the exception of contests where players or participants were paid for taking part.

In proposing a restriction on the opening of theatres, cinemas, and dance halls until after 12.30 p.m., the committee was seeking not specifically to encourage church attendance but to maintain the special character of Sunday as a day which preserved some measure of freedom from compulsory work.

Few Letters

Only a few letters had been received from the general public. These mainly criticised the relaxations proposed by the committee from the standpoint of sabbatarian principles. The Church of England Board of Social Responsibility had not completed consideration of the recommendations, and it might be a little time before they knew the Church's views.

The committee are clearly of opinion that in modern conditions the teaching of Christian doctrine, and religious observance, cannot be secured by law.

It seems that the Church itself does not desire any such direct assistance, and that activities which were once regarded as profane are no longer so regarded, except by a small minority.

What people can do in their leisure hours on Sunday is governed by statutes enacted to achieve purposes no longer regarded as within the proper function of government, but there is a considerable body of opinion which believes that Sunday should be, in some way, different from the rest of the week.

There may be no objection to participation in recreation and entertainment on that day, but proper regard should be had to the need for adequate opportunity for leisure and worship.

Mr. Richard Sharples (Conservative, Sutton and Cheam) was struck by the "very small amount of controversy" that had been aroused by the report. He pointed out a number of anomalies in the present law and described it as "a complete mess" with regard to Sunday entertainment and sport.

Lord's Day Observance Society

Mr. Tom Driberg (Labour, Barking) advised the Government not to pay too much attention to the Lord's Day Observance Society. The noise it made was out of all proportion to its weight. He quoted from one of the

Society's pamphlets (*The Lord's Day in Modern Times*):

One wonders at the long suffering of God. As in the days of Methuselah, He is waiting for His people to turn again. Signs have been given to awake the nation out of its lethargy: floods like that at Lynmouth and Canvey Island, train disasters, air and motor racing accidents—because God is still chastening us as children. Let it be our prayer that He will continue and not give us up to our weaknesses.

Mr. Driberg commented:

In other words, the society want there to be more road accidents, more men, women and children killed in road accidents, air crashes, and so on, and believes it is the will of God that human fallibility should lead to these accidents. Could anything be more blasphemous?

The popular identification of some of the Churches with the present "largely oppressive" Sunday was extremely damaging to the cause of Christianity itself, he added. And: the so-called Continental Sunday was actually less Godless than the dreary English Sunday. It was "*par excellence* a family day" in the Latin countries.

The Committee's View

Mr. Charles Doughty (C. Surrey East), a member of the committee, said that the law was out of date, uncertain, and difficult to enforce. It had no public support, and was little understood or respected. One of the concerns of the committee was that there should be a minimum amount of extra employment on Sundays. One had only to think what would happen if all sports were allowed. Extra police, extra transport workers and so on would be needed.

The committee had, Mr. Doughty said, brought up to date the chaotic law on Sunday opening of shops. The House should make up its mind on the opening of cinemas and theatres.

The Christian Sunday

Sir Cyril Black (C. Wimbledon) said that the position of those who on general grounds opposed relaxation in the Sunday law had been "woefully misunderstood" by some who had spoken in the debate. "I am not a Sabbatarian, extreme or otherwise," he said. He never kept the Sabbath or advised others to keep it. But he belonged to "a not inconsiderable body of people" who believed that there were sanctions that should be recognised and accepted in connection with the Christian Sunday and its observance. "We are not and we do not regard ourselves as being enemies of individual liberty. We regard ourselves as upholders of liberty in its true and best sense."

Practically every recommendation for relaxation of the Sunday laws involved the employment of people who did not at present work on Sundays, Sir Cyril said.

We have a duty as a House to protect the right of these people, which we wish to preserve for ourselves, to observe Sunday in the way in which they wish to observe it.

Other people should not selfishly require people to work on their behalf on Sundays, for their convenience or entertainment, except, of course, in the case of works of necessity.

He did not understand the committee's case for abolition of the option on the Sunday opening of cinemas. "I believe it would be a tremendous injustice to enforce, by act of this House, the Sunday opening of cinemas in districts where time and time again the people in the locality have voted for their closing."

Sir Winston Churchill, with his great facility for expressing things in a lucid and telling way, had once said: "The Lord's Day is a divine and priceless institution, the birth-right of every British subject." The Christian Sunday as

(Concluded on page 68)

This Believing World

We do not know whether "muscular Christianity" exists, but a "multi-denominational group called the Mongrels" (London *Evening Standard*, February 8th) appears to have risen "pheonix-like from the ashes of two defunct theological associations" ready to do battle "on Christian unity" (among other things). Well, why don't they? We are always being told about such organisations, yet never hear of any of them meeting the only people who can give them a run for their money—the Freethinkers of Britain?

★

Of course there is a reason. As the newspaper *Insight* of Christ Church College, Canterbury, sadly admits, it is "apathy". This training college cost £1,000,000 to build and the students share "a brick wall of apathy". Even when the college held its annual meeting with a jazz band in attendance, only nine students danced, and it took another hour for three more to join.

★

The Church of England and chapel attendances are certainly not what they used to be in those happy days of Victorian England depicted so vividly for us by Anthony Trollope. For example, there is the chapel at Grittenham, Wiltshire, where the attendance has dropped from near 100 to 3—a lady and her two daughters. The preacher gives his sermons, hymns follow, and also the collection. The lady herself found it all "very distressing", a rather pathetic understatement. And all this in Protestant England in 1965. We cannot help wondering who will fill our churches and chapels in 2065. Roman Catholics?

★

It seems that divinity students are so anxious to study at Cambridge that they take books from the library and forget to return them. These books form the highest proportion of those missing, the *Evening Standard* informs us (February 6th).

★

The two things which have probably aroused most opposition—more than even the infidel Jews—in the Roman Church are birth control and the marriage of priests, so we can understand why the Vatican has just banned Fr. Pierre Hermand's book, *The Priesthood—Marriage or Celibacy?* Fr. Pierre in fact has been sacked (*The People*, January 31st) for pleading, "Let priests in love marry". The book was first submitted in the usual way to the hierarchy for permission to print, and was "roundly condemned", and Fr. Pierre is now working in a French hospital.

★

According to him, priests live unnaturally; they have affairs, and are forced to live double lives. And they are angry that they cannot marry in a Church which disowns them! But the vast majority of priests are against Fr. Hermand, even if they have a mistress on the sly. So "sex must continue to be taboo". Not many priests have the courage of Joseph McCabe or Emmett McLoughlin who were however lucky enough to "find the Church out" in time, left and got married. McCabe's twelve years in a monastery helped to make him a notable scholar—and a forthright Freethinker. Mr. McLoughlin, now superintendent of a hospital in Phoenix, Arizona, devotes most of his spare time to exposing and fighting Catholic inroads into American life and institutions.

★

Henry Fielding, lively columnist of the "Sun" told this story (February 12th) of a breathless girl who asked John Bird (of *Not So Much a Programme*) after his marriage to the New York actress Anne Stockdale in Chelsea:

"What's it like being married on the same day as Ringo Starr?" Said Bird: "I don't have any religious feelings". "Amen", said Mr. Fielding.

MEDIUMS AND MURDERERS

IN response to our challenge in *This Believing World* on February 5th, that no medium has ever been responsible for bringing a murderer to justice, we have received a cutting from *Weekend* of January 20-26th. Maurice Barbanell, the Editor of *Psychic News*, who kindly sent us the cutting—and who apparently supplied some of the data for the *Weekend* article—suggests that we should "find another tree to bark up". The article alleges that "many crimes have been solved by clairvoyance" and "Now police believe that 'second sight' could be a powerful new ally". Actually, it seems to have taken the police a long time to come to this conclusion, since the cases cited are about 20 or 30 years old. Indeed, the one that Mr. Barbanell marks for our special attention (the murder of a young Scottish typist, Irene Munro) happened as long ago as 1920.

It would clearly be difficult to check up on such a case now, even granting Scotland Yard permission (which is unlikely) and it is hopeless to give any solution on the scanty data available. Unless, of course, one is a Spiritualist, when the case is closed from the start. Really Mr. Barbanell, we cannot accept hearsay "evidence" of this kind.

THE SUNDAY DEBATE

(Concluded from page 67)

a day of rest and worship had played a great and glorious part in our history, said Sir Cyril.

It runs like a golden strand through our long national story. It has made a priceless contribution to the character of our people. Many of those outside this House who seek to destroy the legal safeguards of the Lord's Day do so on the pretext of wishing to cater for people's needs. But I think that they would be more frank if they admitted that the real objective and motive of their efforts is the desire to make profits on seven days instead of six.

Mr. W. R. Rees-Davies (C. Isle of Thanet) said that on Sunday nights there were bigger crowds dancing in Dreamland at Margate than on any other day of the week, and the view of magistrates was that they would rather boys and girls went dancing or listened to the Beatles on Sunday nights than be on the streets.

Mr. David Ensor (Lab. Bury and Radcliffe) said all were agreed that we wanted Britain to be a Christian country, but churchgoing could not be got by the passing of acts of Parliament. "The only result of that has been religious bigotry, the Spanish Inquisition, and the appalling atrocities on both the Roman and the Protestant sides after the Reformation."

Sir Edward Boyle (C. Handsworth): "The illogicalities in the recommendations of the report are very considerably less than the present illogicalities in our Sunday laws."

Mr. George Thomas, Under Secretary at the Home Office, said the Government was not ready with proposals. The subject would not be put into cold storage, but the question of Sunday was not one on which any Government could act hurriedly or impetuously "We are going to look at this matter".

Sir Edward Boyle intervened to ask if he was to understand that there was a good chance of the Government introducing legislation on the subject, and Mr. Thomas replied: "The Government will not shirk its duty. But I can only say at present that we will obviously consider what has been said."

The motion was approved.

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD. (Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street.) Sunday Evenings

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, February 28th, 6.30 p.m.: PERCY DOWNEY, "The Wholeness of Life".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, February 28th, 7.30 p.m.: Mrs. GILLIAN HOLROYD (Secretary, Agnostics Adoption Society), A Lecture.

North Staffordshire Humanist Group (Cartright House, Broad Street, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent), Friday, February 26th, 7 p.m.: A Meeting.

Portsmouth Humanist Society (Friends' Meeting House, 25 Northwood Road, Hilsea, Portsmouth), Friday, February 26th, 7.30 p.m.: A. BURALL, "Humanism, Morals and Censorship".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, February 28th, 11 a.m.: Professor T. H. PEAR, "First Impressions of a Person—Individual and Social Factors".

Tuesday, March 2nd, 7.30 p.m.: WILLIAM GREGORY, "Public Opinion Polls".

Notes and News

THE expected Oxfam decision to extend aid to family planning (Notes & News, 29/1/65) is none the less welcome. The latest bulletin recognises that the hunger problem cannot be solved as long as population is allowed to increase unchecked. It also contains an article on Chile by the Indian High Commissioner reporting that "back-street abortions occurred in 35-40 per cent of all pregnancies in Chile and that 40 per cent of all maternal deaths in the country were caused by abortion". It is this problem, the High Commissioner said, "which has given impetus to the vigorous family planning movement in Chile and other South American countries".

★

MANY unfair criticisms are made of the United Nations, wrote Lena Jeger, when welcoming the Oxfam decision (*The Guardian*, 16/2/65), but "one fair matter for regret" has been the UN's continuing refusal to associate family planning with any of its aid schemes". The Roman Catholic countries—as Mrs. Jeger remarked—have blocked every

effort to enlarge the work of the World Health Organisation in this practical way. But there were "two hopeful facts": a UN population conference to be held at Belgrade in August, and the growing interest in family planning in Catholic countries like those of South America. There was no reason why a woman should have a baby every year if she didn't want it, said Mrs. Jeger. A woman's right to "some control over her own reproductivity" was also a question of her own health and status. Mrs. Jeger had found this well illustrated in China, "where demographic arguments fell on deaf ears, but where there was a growing practice of family planning on health grounds, especially among professional women". The International Planned Parenthood Federation now has 38 countries affiliated to it, and in addition over 40 organisations overseas are receiving grants.

★

AFTER what the *Scotsman* described (15/2/65) as "hours of iconoclastic but generally good-humoured debate" in the Church of Scotland's Assembly Hall in Edinburgh, the Scottish Christian Youth Assembly decided that the present system of Christian education was "unsuitable and inadequate". While acknowledging that "Christianity can only partially be taught" the Assembly called attention to the "lack of sufficiently trained Christian teachers, unsuitable teaching material, insufficient finance for equipment, and the lack of participation on the part of many parents, office-bearers, and members of the Church". But there was, so far as we know, no reference to unsuitable material to teach.

★

THE Right Rev. Dr. Kenneth M. Carey, Bishop of the Edinburgh diocese of the Episcopal Church told the Assembly that it was still possible to come to believe in God and Christ by the use of reason. "The old arguments may appear a bit fly-blown in the light of modern philosophy" he said, "but it seems to me that the arguments for atheism are more difficult to accept than the arguments for theism". If Dr. Carey reviewed the respective arguments, the *Glasgow Herald* (15/2/65) neglected to report them. He had referred earlier, however, to the "horror, cruelty, wickedness or disaster" that can happen anywhere in the world, and the increasing difficulty of discovering "a guiding purpose behind it all". "And yet", he continued, "we should be ungrateful fools if we did not also recognise our tremendous privilege in being alive at this time: a time more thrilling, more exciting, more full of opportunities and more dangerous than any previous age in the history of mankind".

★

THE same issue of the *Glasgow Herald* reported Professor Ritchie Calder's speech at Dundee on February 13th. Two-thirds of the world, he said, were worse off today than in 1945. Yet enjoying the "tremendous privilege" of being alive in this exciting time no doubt!

★

THE *Sun* prides itself on being a modern newspaper with a new look (the only one born of the age we live in and so forth). It is in fact very much the mixture as before, even including a column on the stars. Glancing at this on February 12th, we noted that the technique was likewise the same as ever. "It's not hypochondriac to watch your health, to take weather and risks into calculation", our wife was told; while we learnt that "People and fields you have previously neglected offer best opportunities". "Not"—the advice continued—"that you can forget routine: make time for both". And are you Leo (July 21st-August 21st)? If so, there is "no need to lead a dull life, but avoid physical risks".

Does God Exist? An Unfinished Argument

By DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

SITTING on the fence—being an agnostic—is perhaps the most comfortable position in the arguments between atheists and believers. Feeling that reason cannot give an answer to the controversy, the agnostic can easily excuse himself from the trouble of pushing the arguments to their limits.

But are there any rational arguments for the existence of God that have not been refuted? Is there any conception of God that is not at odds with scientific rationalism?

There are three basic arguments for the existence of God: (1) the ontological argument, that the mere idea of a perfect being implies that one exists; (2) the cosmological argument, that because all things are caused there must, to avoid an infinite regress, be a first cause; and (3) the argument from design, that because the world exhibits some order there must be an intelligent creator. Only the cosmological argument retains any signs of life, and in its conventional form it must be regarded as invalid by anyone who does not object to infinite causal regresses. But there are variations.

Naturalistic metaphysics finds difficulty in explaining the appearance of new qualities in the world. In Lloyd Morgan's philosophy of emergent evolution it is held that when matter becomes arranged in new ways it begins to show new qualities, and that these new qualities are unpredictable. They "pop up" without any basis in the previous state of the world.

The explanation offered by Marxism is that after an accumulation of quantitative changes a sudden jump occurs and a qualitative change appears. It does not take much of a philosopher to pick holes in these two theories.

An interesting approach to this metaphysical problem is contained in the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. His answer is a variation of the cosmological argument in which God is postulated as the cause of new qualities. It is worth a closer look.

There is no inert matter in Whitehead's universe; it consists wholly of self-creating centres of experience. Each of these centres of experience, or actual entities as Whitehead calls them, creates itself out of its environment. Each experiences the qualities of the environment and builds them into its subjective self in a pattern of relatedness. This pattern is determined by aims which the entity entertains for its own future.

So far there is no explanation of the way entities acquire qualities not already in their environment. Whitehead refuses to let them "pop up"; he postulates the existence of a primary entity in whom all possibilities for the world are already actual. This primary entity Whitehead calls God.

Such an approach to the problem of new qualities cannot be incorporated into any philosophy which regards matter, at any level of organisation, to be inert. Whitehead's concept of self-creation applies to elementary particles as well as to complex organic wholes such as man. Subjective experience in a particle is, of course, rudimentary in the extreme.

This radical point of view avoids two hoary metaphysical problems. Firstly, for materialists, at what stage of organisation does matter begin to experience? Secondly, for dualists, how do mind and body interact? In Whitehead's scheme each centre of experience appears to others as a material object; to itself it appears as an experiencing mind (or a low grade equivalent). Mind and matter are the

subjective and objective aspects of actual entities.

How does Whitehead's God compare with the God of Christianity?

The most important difference is that the former is in no sense an all-powerful creator; the only way in which he can influence the world is by offering new possibilities which may or may not be accepted into the aims of actual entities. God cannot interfere with the workings of natural processes; miracles are impossible; petitionary prayer is a waste of time.

Also, if God is not omnipotent the problem of evil is avoided. Christian theology has never satisfactorily answered the argument that if God created the world then he is responsible for the unpleasantness in it. Whitehead's God is not the creator of the world; the world is self-creating; God offers possibilities for improvement; the decision to use them rests with the world. The vision of the Kingdom of Heaven is given by God; the task of building it falls to Man.

We are close now to religious feeling in its most positive form—"world loyalty" as Whitehead called it. Naturalists tend to put such experiences in the same category as those of the neurotic visionary, and to dismiss the whole lot as being without objective significance. Within the framework of Whitehead's theology such cavalier treatment can be avoided.

God is that function in the world by reason of which our purposes are directed to ends which in our own consciousness are impartial as to our own interests. He is that element in virtue of which our purposes extend beyond values for ourselves to values for others. He is that element in virtue of which the attainment of such a value for others transfers itself into value for ourselves.

World loyalty, together with awareness of possibilities for the betterment of the world, are the prerequisites for human progress. These qualities are not confined to those who believe—even if God is their source. Hence, belief is not a necessary condition for the salvation of the world. It is safe to ignore the problem of God's existence while we get on with the politics.

But certain minds are made to ask metaphysical questions, and they will continue to ask whether God exists. Although the agnostic on the fence may be right in saying that there can be no final answer, argument is worthwhile if it serves to show us new relationships among old beliefs.

Humanists and rationalists rightly attack the religions for the unscientific beliefs in miracles and superstition. That the idea of God need not be accompanied by these beliefs has at least been made clear by Whitehead's metaphysical arguments.

Teaching in Texas

ONE of the exciting things about teaching at the University of Texas, according to Roger Shattuck, Professor of Romance Languages, is that "Austin is a political and academic town with forces pulling both ways" (*The Observer* colour supplement 14/2/65). Two years ago the Texas State Legislature tried to pass a law requiring teachers "to acknowledge—on the dotted line—the existence of a Supreme Being". And if that had gone through, said the Professor (who argued against it before a legislative committee) "this university would have been blown apart".

On the Venerable Bede

By H. CUTNER

AKIBA's article (THE FREETHINKER, December 18th, 1964), on one of the most famous Christians in England's ecclesiastical history, sent me to some notes I made a year or so back on the venerable old monk as proof of the way we have been hoaxed on the beginnings of the Christian religion in England.

Let me however make clear that I have not read Bede's "masterpiece"—and I hate discussing any work I have not read. What I can do instead is to show in a small way what our "ecclesiastical" authorities and historians have to say about it, and let the reader judge for himself the precise worth of Bede's "history".

One of the histories of England I have always admired is the *Comprehensive History of England* edited by the Rev. T. Thomson, published in four huge volumes in 1865. It is a highly detailed survey of our history on civil, military, religious, intellectual, and social matters, from the earliest period, and therefore should have used Bede's famous *Ecclesiastical History* which covered a period of about 700 or 800 years pretty extensively. Yet the only mention of Bede in it is a very short note on Jarrow, where he spent most of his life, and a very short account of him and his works; though the reference to him is that he was "illustrious", and that his writings are as "fresh in the present, as ever they were in past ages".

Compare this with the account Green gives in his *History of the English People* (1877). Let me give a few extracts from the long account devoted to Bede:—

The whole learning of the age seemed to be summed up in a Northumbrian scholar . . . [Baeda's] long tranquil life was wholly spent in an offshoot of Benedict's house which was founded by his friend Ceolfred. [Baeda] never stirred from Jarrow . . . Little by little the young scholar made himself master of the whole range of the science of his time . . . Burke rightly styled him "the father of English learning". The tradition of the older classic culture was first revived for England in his quotations of Plato and Aristotle, of Seneca and Cicero, of Lucretius and Ovid . . . His work was done with small aid from others . . . In text books for his scholars, Baeda threw together all that the world had then accumulated in astronomy and meteorology, in physics and music, in philosophy, grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, medicine.

Green does not end Bede's wonderful accomplishments here. Nor does he give *any* authorities for any of them. That a monk called Bede lived in Jarrow nearly all his life need not be disputed. Nor need we dispute that he left some literary remains. But Green wants much more than this. He was "first among English scholars, first among English theologians, first among English historians," and it is in "the monk of Jarrow that English literature strikes its roots". Moreover, "Baeda was a statesman as well as a scholar". In fact, I doubt that in the world-history of man's accomplishments, Green could have found any other man who comes anywhere near equalling Bede, let alone surpassing him. And the tragic thing about it all is we are given no authorities for any of Green's tremendous eulogies. As far as I can speculate, he got them all from Bede's own "works".

What is the truth? It is simply, in the first place, we know next to nothing about him. In Harmsworth's *Universal Encyclopedia*, we are told that "the facts taken from his own writings are almost all that is known of his life"—which contrasts in a remarkable way with Green's panegyrics. Did Bede claim he was "the first" in everything? Did he say he was "a statesman" as well as a great scholar? And so on?

Bede's great work is his *Historia Ecclesiastica* "one of

the main authorities for the history of England in early Saxon times down to 1731", says HUE. And the question, these days, comes up at once—what or who are the "authorities" for his long history? And the answer is we do not know. How could a monk, hardly ever travelling more than a few miles from his monastery in Jarrow, possibly write an authoritative history of Christianity in England in Roman and early Saxon times? The answer is he could not. It is true that the *Encyclopedia Britannica* claims that he collected "his information from the best available sources" without, naturally, naming one of these sources. The statement was probably made by a Catholic writer who knows no more about any of Bede's "authorities" than I do. (The same writer tells us that Bede "knew Greek and probably some Hebrew". Considering that no language under the sun was hated by the Catholic Church as much as Hebrew, that it destroyed every Hebrew book it could find, and that during 700 AD, learning in England was perhaps at the lowest intellectual level of any country in Europe, where or how could Bede learn Hebrew? Did he have Hebrew books? Were there any at all in England? I sometimes doubt if there were any in the Vatican.)

The reader should turn to the late Lord Raglan's brilliant study in "debunking", *The Hero*, and see what his piercing analytical mind has to say about Bede and his "masterpiece". It is, he says, "almost sacrilegious to doubt him . . ." Yet, he adds, "it is difficult to understand why a monk of Durham, who never left his monastery, should be regarded as an unquestionable authority for events which happened several hundreds of miles away, and two or three centuries before his time . . ."

At school, we all were taught the story of Hengist and Horsa; yet it is nothing but a myth. We now know that Saxons were in England long before the two "famous" brothers whose story has long since been debunked—though in books difficult to get in an average bookshop. Raglan points out that, though Bede is the great "authority" for Hengist and Horsa, his accounts of events in England during the fifth and sixth centuries are not merely unreliable but untrue. And what does Alexander Del Mar say in his *Ancient Britain Revisited* (1899)? Bede's information concerning the Anglo-Saxons is "hopelessly wrong and defective" and the story of Hengist and Horsa "an idle tale".

Many other myths, and many miracles, and scores of other "idle tales" are likewise vouched for by Bede. Yet his appears to be the only kind of history we have (except in a very few cases) of what happened in England before and just after Christianity was first introduced—if even any account of this can be authenticated. The period of Bede's activities is known as the Dark Ages, and no wonder. It really is shrouded in darkness.

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CORRESPONDENCE

A DELICATE TOPIC

Further to Mr. Whiting's letter (THE FREETHINKER, 5/2/65) I have frequently been amazed at the utter lack of response by Christians to challenging and provocative letters in the press by Humanists and Freethinkers. This has been my experience several times. One finds it difficult—ungenerous even—to believe that there are not at least one or two who are willing and able to reply.

Could this coyness be a definite policy of avoiding public debate and thus giving wider publicity to "dangerous" anti-Christian views?

Mr. Whiting spoke of religions as "a great and mysterious thing only to be mentioned with humility . . .". He could have said the same for the other two members of the holy trinity of sacred cows—God, King and Country. Some, it is true, have dared to advocate publicly that the time has come for us to consider abandoning much if not all of our national sovereignty for the greater good of international unity, with world government as the ultimate aim—but they are widely regarded as dangerous, if not treasonable cranks. But who would dare to say publicly that, in a modern democracy, a monarch, perched on the top of a system of hereditary aristocracy, is a complete anachronism and it is high time we realised it?

It just isn't done!

D. H. MALAN.

THE ECUMENICAL CONSCIENCE

The fact that the indications of the "conscience" are often wrong suggests that conscience is not a simple but a complex part of our nature. According to Freud, conscience is not always and everywhere a moral or spiritual guide to right action. "Our behaviour," he said, "is only partly governed by morality or reason or will. In each of us, far below awareness, rages the underworld of instinctual energy—savage lusts, primitive greeds, criminal aggressions—from which conscience is formed."

From this viewpoint, some knowledge of the following sciences might be helpful when faced with the problem of removing conflicting dogmas, doctrinal strifes and religious tensions: anthropology, that is, the cultural life and religious ideas of primitive peoples; Egyptian and Pagan mythology; and comparative religion, including of course the science of Christology itself.

If we wish to get a clearer perspective of the conditions which generate the problem of "religious freedom" for man, we must look into our earliest experiences with the human environment, from infant baptism to conversion and confirmation, as well as the deprivations and restrictions imposed by parents and teachers in the ordinary process of growing up. However much we are unfettered by social constraints, or however much we are privileged to exercise the right to worship as our conscience dictates,

we cannot do so outside our own "conditioned personality," so long as these childish fears, inhibitions and coercions remain submerged in the unconscious.

H. F. HAAS

OLD BOGEY

Mr. R. Smith appears to be up against his old bogey, Marxian dialectics, the reconciliation of opposites! Even Mr. Ridley's lucid explanation of an isolated example apparently fails to penetrate. It would seem obvious, that a Calvin today would merely become a competent county councillor, the material conditions not being present for his leadership of a great reformation movement. Without the circumstances of a 1933 Germany, Hitler would not have become führer. I do not accept either Plekhanov's or Ridley's thesis myself, or the policy of assassination would be the logical answer to tyranny. While accepting that only material circumstances can throw up the "individual", I do not think it proven that circumstances do not inevitably find the individual. I fancy that there were a number of Fascist maniacs in 1933 who could have led that deluded nation into its criminal path.

Mr. Ridley's theory that chance, i.e., accident, plays an appreciable part in historical development is more easily acceptable. Had Katherine of Arragon produced a living son, Protestantism in England would have had a different history. The "role of the individual" cannot be excluded if one accepts chance as an historical factor.

EVA EBURY.

"THE RATIONALIST ANNUAL"

Some of D.C. Chapman's comments on some of the writers of the *Rationalist Annual* 1965 are indeed unworthy of a rationalist. In dealing with R. C. Churchill's essay on the problem of pain, he makes the ridiculous assertion of pain fitting in quite understandably with a rationalistic view of the world. If misery is widespread as he himself claims it is, how can it fit in with a rationalistic view of the world unless, of course, you accept some optimistic system to explain it away?

We all know pain is of some value and is necessary to life. It is the immense amount of it and the intensity of it which is the problem, and this cannot be explained away by Christians or optimistic rationalists.

I should like also to say that Mr. Chapman's comments on Sartre should be taken with a pinch of salt. I just wonder if Mr. Chapman read Sartre's unreadable *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, or did he just take Maurice Cranston's word for it?

R. SMITH.

WITHOUT COMMENT

Although religious thinkers no longer think of God as a God of vengeance, they do not fail to realise that sin brings punishment today just as it did in the time of Elijah.

—Letter in the *Yorkshire Post* (12/2/65)

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THIS year will, we are given to understand, see the definitive termination of the complex (and no doubt laborious) proceedings of the Ecumenical Council. The Second Vatican Council, in name a continuation of the first Vatican Council (1869-70), was called together by the late Pope John XXIII, with the explicit intention of effecting those reforms which were necessary if the Catholic Church is to function effectively in the so changed mental climate of the late 20th century.

The First Vatican Council

But the Second Vatican Council would appear to have little in common except its name with its immediate predecessor. For the first Council was, at least in its effective composition and declared intentions, a conservative council initially assembled by Pope Pius IX (1846-78), not with any intention of compromising with contemporary progress, but with the express purpose of resisting all and any future movements designed to radicalise the Church. In which connection, it is relevant to note that the Jesuits, along with such extreme theological reactionaries as the English Cardinal Manning, represented the dominant force. The ecclesiastical liberals (the learned Dr. Dollinger of Munich, was the intellectual leader of the mainly French and German minority) the 1870 prototypes of Archbishop Roberts and his co-authors of *Objections to Roman Catholicism*, were first out-voted and then ruthlessly silenced or expelled, if they continued their opposition to the acts of the Council and, in particular, to its most publicised and controversial decision, the declaration of papal infallibility, which was passed on July 18th, 1870. In the eyes of its contemporaries, both clerical and secular, the first Vatican Council represented a victory for clerical reaction in every sphere.

A Liberal Pope

However, paradox plays its part in ecclesiastical as well as in secular history. For it was precisely the declaration of papal infallibility—universally regarded at the time as an ultra-reactionary move—that eventually led directly to the convocation of the second (reforming) Vatican Council. For the liberal Vatican Council II owed its very existence to the earlier reactionary council's declaration of the dogma of papal infallibility. What presumably the Jesuit sponsors of the dogma in 1870 had not foreseen, was the election of a liberal pope.

However, after a succession of ever more reactionary Pope Piuses (IX, X, XI and XII), Cardinal Roncalli was finally elected after an unusually long and apparently stormy conclave, and as Pope John XXIII proceeded to put into operation a policy which, as and when judged by recent papal standards, was extremely radical. How far this papal turning movement was initially due to personal conviction or was merely shrewd strategy impelled by the current needs of an age dominated by the "winds of change", we have still no means of knowing.

But one fact stands out quite clearly. In Pope John, the Roman Catholic Church for the first time in this century, found dynamic and constructive leadership. It nowa-

days seems unlikely that the "papal revolution" inaugurated by him will ever be entirely erased from the historical record, though the present pope, a career diplomat trained by Pius XII is obviously trying hard to slow down its pace. But it seems to have gone too far for a return to the good old days of the Piuses!

Problems Before The Council

Up to this present time, no decision has been taken by the Vatican Council equal, either in logical precision or historical importance, to the dogmatic decision taken in connection with the declaration of papal infallibility in 1870. But a large number of urgent contemporary problems have already become subjects of controversy.

These range from credibility to contraception; from the reform of the Roman Curia (the papal bureaucracy) to the complex problems attendant on Christian reunion.

Undoubtedly the two subjects for discussion most canvassed in the Council—or at least in the press—have been contraception and Christian reunion. But it seems (in so far as an unbeliever can foresee the inspired decisions of the Holy Spirit) that no immediate action is likely in connection with either of these questions. For Christian reunion does not depend solely upon Rome, and theological memories are apt to be tenacious and bitter. The non-Roman Churches have four centuries of the Counter-Reformation to forgive—or forget. The most that can be at least immediately expected in this field is agreement that atheism is now the public enemy number one of all forms of Christianity.

And the Council is unlikely to issue any very definite instructions on contraception. For Catholic opponents of family limitation can plausibly argue that had, say, Irish and Italian emigrants consistently practised it, Catholicism would not now be a world-wide creed. Much more urgent (in my opinion) from the immediate standpoint of the Council itself, are two other problems upon which both the Vatican Council and the Papacy have already commenced to act: the literally life and death problem represented by apologetics; and the future relations of the Church with the emerging nations in Asia and Africa.

The first of these two problems is (again in my opinion), by far the more important to come before the Vatican Council. For I repeat what I have often emphasised before in these columns: the present crisis of Christianity is essentially a crisis, not merely of organisation but of credibility. Unless the Roman Catholic Church can find some effective substitute for the nowadays moth-eaten demonstrations of her medieval schoolmen, and for the geocentric and pre-evolutionary apologetics of St. Thomas Aquinas, no amount of organisational changes can save it.

Problem number one before the second Vatican Council is, and must always remain that of credibility. For if the first Vatican Council laid it down as a dogma that the existence of God can and *must* be proved by human reason, the second Vatican Council has the (perhaps unenviable) task of discovering some way of actually proving

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Vatican Council: The Summing Up

By F. A. RIDLEY

it. Next in importance probably comes the ever more urgent problem represented by Rome's present and future relations with the emerging races of Asia and Africa. For it is clear that the worldly-wise Papacy has long ago realised that the imperialist era is now definitely over. In which connection, Pope Paul's recent visits to Israel and to India were as much a part of the "papal revolution" as anything done by its originator, Pope John.

The Vatican's Last Stand

Most Rationalists will, I think, concur that nothing makes sense apart from its history. This axiom is certainly true of an institution so deeply rooted in human history as the Papacy. As and when viewed from this angle, Pope John's whole "papal revolution" and the second Vatican Council in which this is at present embodied,

represents the back-to-the-wall stand; the papal (counter) revolution versus the scientific and atheistic revolution which, if and when finally victorious will mark the genocide of the divine species: the end of all supernatural religions. It is, in my submission, because the "infallible" Vatican knows this, and not because of any sudden acquisition of really liberal sentiments, that the Vatican Council is now staging its strategic retreat on to its last defensive lines.

In dealing with so complex a problem, it is dangerous to assume the prophetic mantle. But it would be no surprise if the second Vatican Council were also the last; if by, say, 2065, the spiritual Roman Empire had gone to join its secular predecessors. For it is not only at Rome that events move fast today.

The Veneration of the Odious

By F. H. SNOW

THERE is a great habit of admiring things because they are old. Cathedrals, churches and even common buildings, if historically associated, are eulogised, however ugly or decrepit. Because of this, funds which could far better be devoted to the furtherance of humanitarian causes are spent on the restoration of buildings which have no reasonable excuse for survival. Appeals for thousands of pounds are made to prop up structures, mainly those of an ecclesiastical nature, which, if considered from the point of rational spending, would be left to become rubble. Regarded as time-honoured institutions, to be preserved at whatever cost, they stand mute evidence of indoctrinated thought. Generation upon generation inherits the notion that the ugly, the bizarre, the decayed, are worthy of admiration and preservation, if they happen to be associated with the remote past.

In a visit to the village of Biddenden, in Kent, some years ago, I found myself, with other sightseers, in the centuries-old church. Not being addicted to eulogy of that which has only age to commend it, I saw little to admire and much to deprecate. The ravages of time were heavily impressed on the whole interior, and in one large area the beams supporting the roof had rotted through, and a great hole gaped where the ceiling had collapsed. A large-lettered notice appealed for some thousands of pounds for the renovation of the hoary edifice. To the left of the nave, I was astonished to see a representation of the Nativity, with little figures of the holy babe and his parents, the wise men from the east, shepherds, sheep, angels, cowshed complete with manger, and a very large star—the evident handiwork of members of the church. It being summertime, I wondered what could be the object of the Christmas tableau, till I realised it was to touch the religious feelings of visitors and cause them to drop cash into the collection boxes.

I could see nothing but its age to give the building special interest to strangers. Coming into the churchyard, I wandered around with others inspecting lumps of blackened stone, leaning, like huge decayed teeth, at all angles, and so eroded as to be almost unrecognisable as the headstones of evidenceless graves. I had made the coach trip ignorant of the entertainment at the journey's end, and was disgusted at its nature. Those repellent tombstones were treasured in *perpetuo*, presumably to remind one of the final inescapable beastliness. In that ancient churchyard, anger suffused me.

At Eynsford, in another part of Kent, I detached myself from the trippers swarming the bank of its charming

stream, and entered the twelfth century church. As in the case at Biddenden, a large poster invited funds for the restoration of the Norman-built structure. The large crowd of visitors to the village showed vastly more interest in the pleasures of the waterside than in the historic church, for I found myself a lone entrant.

The place depressed and nauseated me. Its atmosphere was positively unhealthy. The air one breathed was musty, as though impregnated with the damp of long-rotted timbers. The floor sloped towards the crude altar of the box-like building. There was no beauty that I could discern, to plead against its senile defects, for that Norman relic's reprieve from dissolution. In the fresh air outside, I surveyed the ugly structure, wondering at the irrationality of those who saw the desirability of perpetuating it at great cost, in preference to erecting a wholesome, comfortable place of worship for its meagre congregation.

Would any wheel of progress be slowed, history denigrated, education hampered, religious observance hindered, through the demolition or dereliction of this and many other decayed, unsightly churches, most of them with scanty congregations and revolting graveyards? I asked myself. Would it not morally benefit future generations to be deprived of spectacles suggesting human corruption and extinction?

It would be wrong to conclude that I hate all that is old, and love everything new. I dislike the newness that is springing up all around—ultra-modern settlements like Crawley New Town, with concrete blocks for shops, concrete roads, hordes of characterless houses, churches that scream of cement and ballast. Such glaring products of modernity offend me as much as any fusty relic of antiquity. My taste goes for the attractive and individualistic, whether ancient or modern, for restful gravelled roads, churches (if churches we must have) of the comfortable, symmetrical kind of comparatively modern times. For the beautifully old I have admiration, for the unsightly or unwholesome, none, however historic. Modern and ancient ugliness alike offend me, whether of a secular or ecclesiastical nature.

Of course, as a disbeliever in the tenets comprising the *raison d'être* of religious structures, I do not want any sort of church. More correctly, I do not want any sort of building in which the falsehood of a God and a heaven (with or without hell) is preached as unquestionable truth. I would not deny others the right to erect such buildings and worship in them, but for me they are monuments of a

(Concluded on page 76)

Survival of the Social Group—A Principle of Ethics

By JAMES J. THOMPSON

PAST theories of good and right have been incapable of verification, faulty in application. Ethical philosophy requires a premise or principle which both is defensible logically and *a priori*, and which also accounts satisfactorily for human moral behaviour as it actually appears among people deemed by common consent to be of good character. This principle must be self-contained: for if the principle were, for example, like that of Christian ethics, dependent upon admission of existence of a god, or upon any other doctrine extraneous to ethics itself, then one who denies the extraneous doctrine has no morality; but a moral principle should be universal and apply to him, too. Indeed at the present time, people are forsaking religious belief, and there is hence a distinct need for an ethics based on a self-contained principle, rather than one borrowed from theology. Although past ethical theories have failed to provide such a principle, yet common sense declares that such a principle does exist and must exist, for otherwise human conduct would be chaotic.

The principle proposed and advocated here is that the good, the right, the moral, is that conduct which is deemed to contribute to the survival of society.

The word "society" for this theory is difficult to define, but not difficult to conceive. It can mean, primitively, any number of people more than one who interact in any way with one another. Practically, a society is the group of people with which a given individual thinks he could interact in ways which can contribute to his own personal survival. A Londoner considers people of Manchester to be within his society, because he not only enjoys benefits of exchange of commodities and culture with Manchester, but also because he thinks he could go there, be accepted by the people as one of them, settle there, take employment there, and rear his children there in a cultural heritage he desires for them. This Londoner does not consider Lenin-grad within his society, for he does not visualise himself as able to live there, to converse with the people there, to be accepted by them as one of them, to earn a living there, to rear a family there. But a society is not necessarily a nation or state, for the Jews for example, dispersed through the world for centuries, have yet considered themselves to constitute a single society regardless of geographic boundaries. Nor is a society a government; rather a government may be an instrument of society, and societies have overthrown their governments, as in the French Revolution. Individuals who oppose their governments may feel themselves members of either a smaller society, such as a royal family, a faction, etc., or a larger one, such as a world society, or may fear that the actions of the government actually imperil society.

It is necessary further to define the sphere of ethics as concerned with interaction among people. It is not concerned with individual conduct which affects nobody else. It does include within its scope an inter-personal behaviour. Business is not usually considered an ethical matter, but this is because economic practices reward successful business so immediately and so generously that business is motivated really by self-interest rather than by social interest. But if everyone were to become suddenly lazy, and all business were to stop, then business would become indeed a crucial moral issue.

Consider, if you will, the alternative propositions that society should survive or ought to survive, and that society should not or ought not to survive. If the former alter-

native is accepted, then the conclusion follows that there must be an ethical principle that persons should do what they can to contribute to the survival of society; for to declare that a thing should be done is to declare that persons should do it, and it would be incoherent to believe that something should be done and yet it is a matter of indifference whether anyone does it. If the latter alternative, that society should not survive, be accepted, then society should end. If a society were to end, would it be replaced by another or not? If it were replaced by another, as the Americans did after their revolution, society still survives and endures; it is changed, but has not ended. If the terminated society is replaced by no other, then the question is, does the destruction of society imply the destruction of the people who compose it? If it does, there is no need for an ethics or an ethical principle, for ethics is concerned with human conduct. If it does not, then do these surviving individuals interact, or not? If they do interact, they constitute a society, within the definition above. Since this conclusion contradicts the assumption with which we started, it must be rejected, for we started to explore the consequences of the assumption that society should end, and a conclusion that society does not end would entail an argument in a perpetual circle which could be escaped only by going to the alternative conclusion that individuals would not interact. If they do not interact, then they live solitary existences like worms in the soil, each worm digging his own hole without concern for any other worm. Then they need no ethics as defined above, and no ethical principle at all. Hence we are faced with the alternative: either people should contribute to the survival of society; or there can exist no ethics or ethical principle at all. If there is to be any morality at all, a principle of it must be that people should contribute to the survival of society.

The alternative assumptions above are not inclusive, for there can be a third: it makes no difference whether society survives or not. This alternative can be rejected, because if ethics is defined as concerned with man in society, with inter-social conduct, then it is not indifferent whether society exists. Also it can be argued that if it is indifferent whether society survives, it is equally indifferent whether there should be any ethics or ethical principle.

This ethical principle is both teleological and deontological: teleological, because it upholds a purpose; deontological, because the nature of morality itself requires the principle that society should continue.

Empirical verification that this principle is actually the implicit foundation of moral conduct can be found in palaeontology, archaeology, history, anthropology. The first anthropoids who ever departed from the beasts, however few the members of that first little human family, however ignorant of the ways of the world and of man, must have at least realised the existence of each one and of one another, and the need for such action on the part of each as might ensure the survival of that whole group. As our primitive ancestors advanced both in numbers and culture, this necessity was never lost, not to the present day. Throughout the whole period of human existence, instance upon instance may be cited to exemplify this basic moral principle, and indeed all of history may be interpreted in accordance with it.

Implicit acceptance of a guiding principle of survival of societies, albeit undefined and only vaguely recognised,

(Continued on page 76)

This Believing World

The pathetic attempts to prove that Spiritualists do now help the police to solve unsolvable crimes—if not in England—are particularly in evidence these days. Six women have been murdered, and not a single medium in the country has been able to provide even a whisper of a clue. It is not because we haven't the mediums. Some of ours, like Mrs. Leonard, Mrs. Twigg, Mrs. Roberts, Mr. Benjamin, and many others, are "world famous". They all produce talks with dead relatives or friends as easily as non-psychics bring living people to the telephone. Alas, when it comes to helping the police find the murderer they are as powerless as the most ignorant unbeliever.

★

In the "Daily Express" (February 16th) William Barkley tells us that MPs agree that the old laws, which made the British Sunday dull and drab, will be abolished. Not "with a bang or a whimper" but abolished. But so indifferent is Parliament on the matter that, "when the Government asked MPs to advise them on the question . . ." there were never more than "a dozen MPs present". Which really is what one would expect. The man who wound up for the Government was Welsh lay preacher, Mr. George Thomas, Under Secretary at the Home Office—naturally, the best possible choice! The Government was "not ready with proposals", he said.

★

The remains of Peter have been found in scores of places. And the latest find is by "a woman archaeologist in the Vatican" (*Daily Express*, February 19th). This time, they are "fragments of a skull and half a skeleton in a box in St. Peter's Basilica". Could anything be more evidential? To make things absolutely foolproof, all that need be done is to put the remains under glass and ask every person in Italy suffering from an incurable complaint to touch it. Such a treatment, followed by the prayers of the sick person, would result in an instantaneous cure—and thus confound all the stupid sceptics in the world; to the greater glory of the Vatican and Peter, of course!

★

In the same journal we are told of an "historic step toward Church unity"—that the Roman Church has officially agreed to co-operate with the World Council of Churches. The Vatican wants "a study of ways for future collaboration". There was "tremendous applause" when this was announced in Geneva the other day. But anybody familiar with "the ways that are dark" of the Vatican knows that there can be one and only one type of unity with the Roman Church—to be swallowed up whole by it!

★

According to "The People" (February 24th), the latest import from America is "pop religion". And one of the five pirate radio stations which bombard England daily is responsible. It has gone "religious" for £115 an hour. The biggest advertising groups are American, and the producer a Mr. Calvert, decided it worthwhile "converting" his hit-parade numbers. He now broadcasts Seventh Day Adventism, the Voice of Prophecy, and Wings of Healing. Mr. Calvert does not go to church, but is very religious—which made "Lord" Sutch exclaim: "Here's Calvert going all religious, it beats me". But surely not at £115 an hour!

WITHOUT COMMENT

"Humanists" is perhaps a false description of this group; they appear to be the product of this present adolescence of thought which can only be termed "materialist", and which lowers mankind to the status of an intelligent animal whose immediate wants are his god.

—Letter in the *Daily Telegraph* (20/2/65)

THE VENERATION OF THE ODOUS

(Concluded from page 74)

credulity disgraceful to our age. And when I see the crumbling bastions of superstition patched up and preserved as precious heritages, I think that we are still infantile in reasoning capacity, still primitively indecent.

Christendom has always hugged horror to its breast, and persists in flaunting its sepulchral stock-in-trade in modernity's face. Mouldy graveyards flank the approaches to many churches, and the atmosphere of the tomb mars wholesome reflection. In this forward-looking age, our "green and pleasant land" is blotched by dank souvenirs of the savagely superstitious past. We need to foster rational ideals, emancipate ourselves from the cult of the ancient and effete, and aspire to the creation of a world free of the man-created gods which retard our civilisation and degrade our intelligence.

SURVIVAL OF THE SOCIAL GROUP

(Continued from page 75)

has formed the foundation of government, of law, of religion, of sex codes, of education, of national sovereignty, of international relations, of customs, of all social institutions and actions.

Although anarchy may theoretically be the ideal state of society, it has not been found practicable, and a system for orderly regulation of human affairs has had to be imposed upon all, or accepted by all, to ensure the survival of society in such aspects as defence against enemies, protection of life and property, enforcement of contracts and other matters, neglect of which would certainly imperil the continuance of the state. Government is an instrument, a tool, of society, and it is an error to regard it as the master.

Law is the formulation of specific rules for the continuance of society. It may be that not all law is human, for there may be as well natural laws which affect human conduct. The differences between American and English copyright law might furnish an interesting example. Law confers rights and duties. An end of law is justice, which implies equality of treatment by society of members who are relevantly equal.

Although religion probably began with attempts to explain mysteries of nature by peopling the world with unseen spirits whose capricious wills dominated all events beyond the immediate control of man, it was soon turned to practical use as a means for enforcing law. A hierarchy of priests, especially if endowed with the pompous ceremonials and trappings which so impress the ordinary people, was very useful to a ruler who had to rule in person, with the complex administrative organisations that characterise modern governments. As the falsity of religious doctrines becomes ever more clearly apparent with the progress of scientific discovery, people are nevertheless reluctant to discard religion for concern about what would replace it. As if something must replace it. This trepidation is due to a long-prevailing fallacy that morality springs from religion, rather than that religion is an enforcement instrument for morality, which in fact springs from the necessity to preserve society.

(To be concluded)

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound).—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12–2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street.) Sunday Evenings

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays. 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday. 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Bristol Humanist Group (Hawthorns Hotel, Bristol), Tuesday March 9th, 7.30 p.m.: H. S. WHALEY, "Some Developments in Modern Education".

Cambridge Humanists (Cambridge Union—tickets from Secretary, 12 Brookside, Cambridge), Sunday, March 7th, 3 p.m.: PROFESSOR WILLIAM EMPSON, "The Recent Christian Revival in Literary Criticism".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, March 7th, 6.30 p.m., 84th Anniversary: C. BRADLAUGH BONNER, "Freethought Today".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place London, W.1), Sunday, March 7th, 7.30 p.m.: JAMES MCKIE, "The TV World—Parsons, Pops and Panties".

Richmond and Twickenham Humanist Group (Room 5, Community Centre, Sheen Road), Thursday, March 11th, 8 p.m. A meeting.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, March 7th, 11 a.m.: LORD SORESEN, "The Human Weaving of Theological Patterns".

Tuesday, March 9th, 7.30 p.m.: OTTO WOLFGANG, "The BBC's Second-Class Subscribers".

Surbiton and Malden & Coombe and Kingston Branches NSS (The White Hart, Kingston Bridge, Hampton Wick), Friday, March 6th, 8 p.m. A meeting.

Notes and News

HAVING had the pleasure of corresponding with Arthur O'Halloran for some years, and of meeting him and his wife when they visited England, we fully endorse Mr. Hornibrook's remarks on page 80. Mr. O'Halloran's last article for THE FREETHINKER, "New Zealand's Pioneer Missionary" reached us a little while ago, and is printed this week.

★

A MEMORIAL meeting to the late Victor Purcell, CMG, Litt. D., of Trinity College, Cambridge, has been arranged by a number of his friends, and will take place at 6 p.m. on Monday, March 8th, in the Parlour, Gonville and Caius College. Dr. Purcell, who was University Lecturer in History, was also that "very ordinary girl"—actually a

brilliant satirist—"Myra Buttle", author of *The Sweeniad*, *Toynbee in Elysium* and *The Bitches' Brew*.

★

JOHN MORGAN was not perhaps the most suitable person to interview Cardinal Heenan (*Panorama*, February 22nd). Mr. Morgan's own editor, Paul Johnson, Catholic admirer of Pope John, could have asked more searching questions. But then, Mr. Johnson is on ITV. Indeed, one feels that the Independent *This Week* would have done a better job than did BBC. We might perhaps have heard from the liberal Michel de la Bedoyere in addition to the completely orthodox Hugh Kay, and had more criticism than of the slight aloofness and coldness which Mr. Kay thought even the Cardinal would admit. What we got, in fact, was a completely orthodox profile: the "middle class" birth-place, boyhood pictures, interview with a schoolmate (who, of course, never expected Joseph Heenan to end up where he has), Westminster Cathedral, walking in St. James's Park and so on. As for the urbane Cardinal himself, ready as ever to laugh off the difficult question—and allowed to do so as surely no politician would be—at least he betrayed the selfishness at the heart of Christianity when he described his main aim in life as saving his own soul.

★

WRITING (in the *Birmingham Post*, 19/2/65) with what he called "a deep love and loyalty to the Church", Father Arnold A. McMahon denied that contraception was always wrong. Without it, "a woman would have so many children that she would become their slave—unable to grow in that richness and maturity which is her God-given right". Every woman has "limited emotional, physical and spiritual resources," said Father McMahon, and "God does not want her to go beyond them". But, he argued, such a woman has "a right to intercourse" and God "has not made her womb to be a machine that mass produces babies, battery-hen style". If, then, man uses his talents to develop means and methods enabling "husbands and wives to retain their humanity, this can only be a great gift from God."

★

FATHER MCMAHON referred to the enthusiastic reception of the "historic speeches" of Cardinals Leger, Suenens and Alfrink, and Patriarch Maximos of Antioch, at the Vatican Council on October 29th and 30th, 1964. And yet, he said, here in England many seemed afraid to speak. But the Father had "come to believe that not only *may* Catholics use contraceptives"—he believed they had "the right". And, he added boldly, nobody could take the right from them. Thou shalt not kill; but there were "more types of destruction than physical murder. It prevents a human being from being able to love". And, the "teaching authority of the Church should not be trying to take away such a right . . .". On the evening of the day his article was published, the Father was advised to visit the Superior General of his order in Rome.

★

"THIS had to happen," said Freethinker Professor P. Sargant Florence, who described Father McMahon as courageous. The dogma was breaking down, the Professor added, "in the face of the needs of Roman Catholic families". A few days later another young priest, Father Cocker, came out in support of Father McMahon, and was relieved of his duties.

★

A VERY different priest who, so far as we know, was never reprimanded by his Church, is due to retire at the age of 73. Father Charles Coughlin gained world-wide notoriety in the 1930s for his broadcasts, in which he praised Adolf Hitler. His church is the Shrine of the Little Flower, at Royal Oak, Detroit.

New Zealand's Pioneer Missionary

By ARTHUR O'HALLORAN

ON Christmas Day, 1814, the Reverend Samuel Marsden, a chaplain in New South Wales and a magistrate at Parramatta, a few miles from Sydney, arrived in New Zealand, at the Bay of Islands and preached to several hundred Maoris and some twenty Europeans. He took as his text "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy". It was the first Christian service ever held in New Zealand. New South Wales was at the time the centre of one of England's nefarious convict settlements. New Zealand had not yet become a British colony. It did so in 1840, when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in the same area—the Bay of Islands some 150 miles north of Auckland.

However to get back to Marsden and his Christmas Day service. This event was commemorated with great publicity on Christmas Day, 1964. The New Zealand Government issued a special pictorial stamp. Marsden's great-great-grandson, the Rev. R. E. Marsden, vicar of Pendennis, Cornwall, travelled all the way from England to be present and to preach the commemoration sermon. The Queen and the Archbishop of Canterbury sent messages. The Governor-General, Sir Bernard Ferguson, attended. The Primate of the New Zealand Anglican Church and three or four other bishops waded ashore at the identical spot where Marsden had landed one hundred and fifty years before. The front pages of New Zealand newspapers splashed headlines and pictures of the commemoration event; editorials solemnly commented and "looked back"; the BBC included it in its news.

It was a glorious summer's day. The sun shone and sparkled on the waters of the bay—truly a bay of memories but some of them vicious and murderous. There was a large attendance of pakehas and Maoris. Cars and yachts added to the colour. All went well—all to plan—except for one "nasty" unexpected piece of journalism. New Zealand's most widely read weekly, *New Zealand Truth*, with a circulation from end to end of the Dominion came out, a couple of days before the celebrations with a special article headlined, "The black facts about Samuel Marsden". And it called this churchman, flogger, gunman, sadist, squatter, Christian? A nasty pill to swallow as the echoes of pious adulation of Marsden, the Apostles Creed (in Maori and English) and Marsden's old hymn "All people that on earth do dwell" merged with the rippling tide.

Samuel Marsden was the son of a Yorkshire blacksmith and small farmer. His mother was Methodist and Sam too belonged to the Methodist Church for a time. But in early manhood he joined the Church of England. And, in 1793 he obtained an official appointment as assistant chaplain to the convict colony of New South Wales. He became a sheep farmer and was appointed a magistrate. He had the power to order floggings, and did so with a vengeance. Eric Ramsden's biography of Marsden, published more than twenty years ago revealed this reprehensible side of Marsden. *The Auckland Star*, in its editorial of December 22nd, 1964, referred to Marsden's career in the magistracy of New South Wales, which "as is plain now, was a mistake and in these times would be held to be incompatible with the office of a Christian chaplain". Nevertheless, said the *Star*, "any man, to be judged fairly, must be assessed in the social context of the time in which he laboured. He ordered floggings then for what would be minor offences today. Which is not a matter for condemnation so much as for realisation that he was inevitably a product of a harsher age".

Marsden certainly lived in a harsh age, but there were good and noble men, such as Romilly, living in the same age; men who strove with might and main to lessen the inhumanities and cruelties of man to man. No doubt the psychiatrist would today have some of the answers to Marsden's odious conduct. Be that as it may, Marsden is a bad advertisement for a religion which is claimed to be the hope of humanity—indispensable for the moral and spiritual uplift of mankind. It is not easy to forgive Marsden's sadism—his frightful penchant for the lash, his indifference to the pain and suffering he inflicted—the 300 lashes (maximum allowed under British law at that time) to Paddy Galvin the Irishman, to cite one of the worst cases. To me there is nothing to love or respect in the man. He preached a gospel of love and forgiveness; mouthing the "good news" of eternal bliss, yet ever ready to inflict pain and suffering on the unfortunate convicts, even when other punishments were available and permitted.

I have not checked on the other charges made by *New Zealand Truth*, and am not prepared at this stage to pass judgment on them. But ever since, many years ago, I read the result of Ramsden's researches, I have known there was little to endear the memory of New Zealand's most famous missionary. And the pious platitudes and blandishments over the recent celebrations were certainly not aimed at revealing the real man.

A stained glass window commemorates this "saintly", clergyman-magistrate-missionary in St. Mary's Cathedral, Auckland, and the reader may be surprised to learn that the writer collected a mite towards it. My excuse? I was young and innocent, addicted to Hymns Ancient and Modern, Collects for the Day, the donning of surplice and cassock, and most assuredly knew nothing of the cruelties and hypocrisies of the Rev. Samuel Marsden.

We'll Remember Them

By PETER COTES

WHEN Andrew Lang once wrote that "to have a clever and accomplished man telling you, in his best manner, what thoughts come into his head after reading even a new novel, is no trifling pleasure among the pale and shadowy pleasures of the mind", he could quite easily have been referring to Hesketh Pearson's posthumous work, *Extraordinary People* which was completed shortly before the author's death in April 1964, and is now at last published (Heinemann, 30s.).

Pearson, who was a poor actor in his young days (I have this on the best of authority, although I never saw him act) was besides being a merry fellow and good companion, surely one of the best popular biographers of our time. He writes here with all his accustomed fluency and zest, and the result is a book which must be especially absorbing to all Freethinkers. Wilkie Collins, Erasmus Darwin, Thomas Day, Henry Fielding, Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Francis Galton, Frank Harris, Samuel Ogden, Tom Paine, Anna Seward and Bernard Shaw are all in potted biographies dealt with by an expert at the job, who couldn't write a dull page if he tried. But for my taste, because it opened up so much food for thought, his best contribution to the present volume is the ultimate chapter, "Beyond the Pale".

It is an essay in which Pearson, himself a Freethinker, reflects how, nearly thirty years ago, sitting with two

friends, the late Hugh Kingsmill and Malcolm Muggeridge (so sceptically and happily still here with us!) the trio got around to discussing the now pop word, "Establishment". As initially Pearson apparently gave general currency to this word used in a secular sense, he goes on to explain how it eventually appeared in his biography of Henry Labouchere, published in 1936. His summing up of why even such a pillar of the Establishment as Dr. Johnson was not "accepted" as an insider, but was always an outsider, as well as Shaw's own witty, affectionate, and perceptive views on the real (as opposed to the popular) reason why Frank Harris could never be acceptable to the Establishment, make for enlightening reading. Shaw's own expulsion from yet another mirror of the Establishment, the Dramatist's Club, during the first world war, is entertainingly dealt with—in GBS's own words.

Other independent "spirits", who would have reached the top of their professions if they had only been able to conform to the safety-first policy of establishments were: - Sir Richard Burton "whose freedom of thought and speech terrified the official world"; Samuel Butler, "who was ignored by the scientific mandarins of his age"; and W. S. Gilbert, "who laughed at all authority, rounded off his career as a librettist by poking fun at the national anthem, and did not receive a knighthood until he was considered too old to be awkward".

Whistler, Elgar and Herbert Barker, the osteopath, whose offer of free treatment for the soldiers in the 1914-18 war was declined by the Home Office, are others who are mentioned as being unable—physically as well as mentally, presumably—to take their places anywhere but outside the Establishment of their times. Personally, I should have liked the inclusion in this gallery of those ruggedly independent extraordinary people of genius, of Churchill; he who could never really be depended upon *not* to rock the ship of the Establishment if he felt like it, and whose almighty talent flowered as much when "in the wilderness" between two world wars, as when he mercifully had control of affairs of state during the second world combustion.

And then there was Ettie Rout, once described by H. G. Wells as, "that great unsung heroine of the first world war" who deserves a chapter to herself as an opponent of the Establishment about whom Pearson writes so engagingly. If those odd non-conformists of the present, who are nevertheless succeeding *outside* the Establishment, are a mere handful today—Pearson's old friend, the poet, Colin Hurry in commerce; James Cameron in journalism; John Osborne in the theatre; Kenneth Tynan year in and year out with unforgettable essays in dramatic criticism—no matter: that they carry on at all does not invalidate Hesketh Pearson's case. Only perhaps with luck, tenacity, and a very great talent can an artist succeed outside, instead of inside, the Establishment. The rebel, in order to succeed, cannot afford to be less than brilliant, and even with that brilliance, he needs luck.

Let it never be forgotten in our own day that that splendid novelist, Joan O'Donovan, is still compelled to work as an assistant headmistress in a mixed secondary school, nor that Sean O'Casey died in the same month recently as Ian Fleming, poorer in wordly goods than James Bond's creator, but richer in every other way outside the portals of the Establishment. H. G. Wells, despite his world-fame, went officially unrecognised when the Labour Government he'd done so much to bring to power, swept into office in 1945. The greatest "populariser" of socialism in our time died without receiving any of those "honours" he deserved, but never requested. Undoubtedly he'd have turned down on principle a life-peerage had he been offered anything as pedestrian as this title has become. Paul Rotha, docu-

mentary pioneer, art critic, screen writer-director and film historian, to digress further, has always worked outside the Establishment; he brought an acute social sense even into his productions for the screen or *The Times* newspaper and the GPO: both commissions by the Establishment. Pearson recalls here that GBS himself, who way back in the 1890s with his tracts and speeches, once formed with the Webbs an opposition Establishment called the Labour Party, with the Labour Party in power at the end of his life confided to the author, "I am not persona grata with the Cabinet just now". Shaw would have kicked over the traces of any Establishment including one of his own making.

Yes, how much poorer we should have been without these "wild men"; the "irregular", the "anarchist", the "eccentric", the "stormy petrel" and the "show off". They have been described by these and by many other names as well by their critics, the place-hunter, the safeman, the time-server and the stooge. But the word "freethinker" means precisely what it says, and applies as much to theists like Donald Soper and Trevor Huddleston as it does to contributors to this paper. Or to Hesketh Pearson himself and all the extraordinary people of this, his final work.

God or No God?

By TOM PRICE

THE existence of God is acknowledged so widely, and in such a variety of ways by such a variety of people, that it seems to be a truism, a strong accomplished fact.

It is very difficult to argue against the existence of God in these circumstances, but that is what the atheist does.

The intelligent atheist, however, is not content with merely refuting the existence of God; he seeks to explain how the *idea* of God grew up: in other words, how man created God in his mind.

The first difficulty he has is to find out exactly which God he is out to explain. For definitions of God vary widely.

A savage sees God in the giant tree or the untameable river. A tribal Jew sees God as an avenger who is always on his side and will help to win his battles.

A Jehovah's Witness sees God as a perfect man who will literally come to earth, slay the Devil, and institute the millenium.

A negro slave saw God as a benevolent "Massa" who would open his arms, soothe the lashes of whips and words, and make the heavens ring with eternal and highly-rhythmic tunes.

Our grandfathers saw God as a stern but righteous judiciary, who would punish the sinful and cherish those who went to church, did not beat their wives and knitted nightgowns for Kaffirs.

The learned Protestant theologian sees God as a Spirit that pervades the hearts of mankind.

The politician sees God as a humanitarian capitalist, or as the fount of socialism.

Hitler's God was a jew-baiter; Verwoerd's God is apartheid, the Salvation Army's God is a bowl of soup and a bed and a brass band.

Take your choice and pay your price! Choose your God to suit your circumstances!

The poor atheist is at a loss to know where to start. Which God should he fire his logical guns at?

And yet, the very quandary gives him ammunition. The very fact that there are so many Gods with so many faces,

contradictory faces, is some evidence that God is a very human creation.

Ah, says the theist—but how do you explain the fact that everybody accepts a god of *some* sort?

To answer that question is the hope of the atheist; in fact he has already answered it. But there are so many gods on the market that it is difficult to get in with a new product.

CORRESPONDENCE

TEACHING COUNCIL (SCOTLAND) BILL

May I refer to your note (19/2/65) "The Churches in Politics" where you say, "The only consolation is that, in some respects at any rate, the two Churches are likely to cancel each other out"?

This is cold comfort to humanist or freethinking teachers in Scotland, who have learned by bitter experience that the earlier appointments of religious representatives on local education committees has resulted in these people using their opportunity to victimise and withhold promotion from anti-religious teachers.

That is why some of us have got together to appeal to the Secretary of State to consider the appointment of a Humanist representative to the proposed Teaching Council, in the event of the Bill retaining the principle of having representatives of beliefs given a place on the Council. As spokesman I have now received the following reply:—

Dear Sir,

I am writing on behalf of the Secretary of State to acknowledge your letter of 13th February requesting that a representative of the Humanist Movement be allocated a place on the Teaching Council.

Your letter will receive attention.

Yours faithfully,

Sgd. G. G. Lyall, Private Secretary.

I would like to get in touch with more teachers who are disturbed by the fact that religious representatives are being considered for appointment to the Teaching Council and I hope that this letter will enable them to get into touch with me. When replying please state whether agreeable to having your name made public or kept confidential as I realise that publicity brought to the notice of church representatives on education committees could have an effect of prejudicing possible chances of promotion.

I may say that I have also approached the Secretary of the Scottish Council of Humanists to ask his Council to deal with this matter and, if necessary, to consider the handling of the subject on our behalf.

E. G. MACFARLANE,
Chairman, Dundee Humanist Group,
10 Harefield Road, Dundee.

DAVID AND SOLOMON

While thanking Mr. Ben-Yehudah for his kind reference to me, may I say that I came to the conclusion that these famous "kings" were mythical only after a hard course of reading.

So indoctrinated have we all been about Bible heroes, that it will probably take scores of years or even centuries to persuade people that the Bible is packed with allegories or, to put the matter more simply, with fairy tales, extremely well put together and, in the Authorised Version, beautifully translated.

However, if I may, I will try and show in future articles why I am quite convinced that while there are some historical names in Kings and Chronicles, David and Solomon have had no more real existence than Cain and Abel, Romulus and Remus, or Peter and Paul. No archaeological discoveries have revealed any trace of them in Palestine.

H. CUTNER.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY 59th ANNUAL DINNER

Guest of Honour: LEO ABSE, M.P.

at the

Horse Shoe Hotel, Tottenham Court Road, London, W.1.

SATURDAY, MARCH 20th, 1964

RECEPTION 6 p.m. DINNER 6.30 p.m.

Chairman: DAVID TRIBE

Vegetarians catered for Evening Dress Optional
Tickets 22/6 from the Sec., 103 Borough High Street, S.E.1.

OBITUARY

I regret to announce the death, at the age of 73, of Arthur O'Halloran, of Auckland, New Zealand. Mr. O'Halloran was a man of wide reading and wide interests, and he took a prominent part in any worthwhile cause, no matter how unpopular it made him; and he always stood as a champion of the underdog. He hated tyranny and hypocrisy, condemned war and its so-called glories. He fought against capital punishment; supported vigorously with pen and speech the Howard League for Penal Reform, the Radio Freedom League and the New Zealand Rationalist Association.

Mr. O'Halloran was very fortunate in having a wife who shared his interests fully, and fought with him for the causes they considered worthy. We send her our deepest condolences. Some two or three years ago the O'Hallorans came to Britain on holiday, when they met many of the British Freethinkers who admired their direct approach to questions of mutual interest.

Of Arthur O'Halloran it can be said without doubt that he devoted his energy and his time,

To the cause that needs assistance
To the wrongs that need resistance
To the future in the distance
And the good that we may do.

F. A. HORNIBROOK.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Secular Society was held at 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1, on Wednesday, February 17th. Present Mr. D. H. Tribe who was in the chair, Mr. W. Griffiths (Treasurer), Messrs. Barker, Collins, Condon, Ebury, Hornibrook, Kuebart, Leslie, Millar, Miller, Shannon, Sproule, and Timmins, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. McIlroy, Mrs. Venton, and the Secretary (Mr. W. McIlroy). An apology was received from Mr. F. Warner.

New members were admitted to the Marble Arch, North London, Reading, Surbiton and Parent branches. Financial reports for December 1964 and January 1965, were accepted. The annual financial report of Marble Arch Branch was read before the meeting and congratulations were expressed to the branch.

Mr. W. Shannon was elected delegate to the National Council for Civil Liberties conference on Northern Ireland. It was reported that plans for future activities in connection with secular education were being formulated. Final arrangements for the 59th Annual Dinner were announced. A letter would be sent to the Lord Chancellor urging that the Blasphemy Laws be repealed. Oxfam was congratulated on including family planning in its programme. A protest would be sent to the Italian authorities on the banning in Rome of performances of Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Representative*. The next meeting was arranged for March 10th.

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103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

The Freethinker

Volume LXXXV—No. 11

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Price Sixpence

THE murder of the famous Negro revivalist, black nationalist and former deputy leader of the Black Muslims, affords a startling reminder that the long tradition of religiously-inspired assassinations is still operative in the modern world, and in the United States, where Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet and founder of what is still perhaps the most successful of post-Christian religions in modern times, the Church of Latter Day Saints (commonly known as Mormons), was lynched by an infuriated mob of American frontiersmen in 1844. Nor has religiously-inspired murder been confined, again even in modern times, to the New World. For the Bab, the Persian pseudo-prophet who founded the still widely-diffused Bahai religion, was also judicially murdered by an orthodox Muslim Persian tribunal about the same time as Joseph Smith. Neither the American nor Persian prophet was unique in the manner of his end, for if there is any substratum of factual truth in the legends recorded in the New Testament, lynch-law was responsible for the deaths of several early pioneers of the then novel and unacceptable Christian heresy.

1865-1965

It is somewhat ironical, perhaps an ominous portent, that the murder of Malcolm X, which will probably spark off a new chain of homicidal violence and which must in any event exacerbate an already tense racial situation, should have occurred almost exactly a century after the close of the savage American Civil War, the best-known result of which (though not its original cause) was the liberation of the Negro slaves. This year, too, is a centenary of assassinations. For if 1965 has demanded the human sacrifice of Malcolm X, the most publicised at least of Negro nationalists, 1865 saw the destruction of a far more valuable life, that of Abraham Lincoln.

Any personal comparison between Abraham Lincoln and Malcolm X could only be futile, for Lincoln was one of the world's now universally acknowledged great men, whereas it would not appear that Malcolm X was anything more in reality—as opposed to the perfervid imagination of his own sect—than a talented showman and demagogue, perhaps a potential Negro Hitler, preaching racialism in reverse. He was not indeed the first of his kind. Marcus Garvey, a formidable demagogue with whom I once debated, had anticipated the Black Muslims in his demand for a separate Negro republic, and even ran for the Presidency of the USA.

But it is significant, if not actually ominous, that exactly a century after the end of the first Negro revolution—as we may appropriately term the emancipation movement which, thanks to Lincoln finally triumphed in 1865—we seem to be entering a second Negro revolution. Where and how, will it end? Is Malcolm X destined to live in American history as the Negro "John Brown"?

President Johnson's Dilemma

The mounting wave of violence that appears already to be following close upon the murder of Malcolm X con-

fronts even a professional politician like President Johnson—whom another assassin's bullet so swiftly raised to the Presidency—with a problem of appalling complexity. The mounting war in Vietnam is surely sufficiently daunting for even the stoutest heart and the broadest pair of shoulders. But here is, perhaps, an even more terrifying problem on his own doorstep: on the one hand, the intransigent white Deep South with what is in effect, an

apartheid mentality and an apartheid culture—the fine flower of which has blossomed into the Ku Klux Klan—and an increasingly intransigent Negro racial movement, the culminating point of which is represented by the Black Muslims and Malcolm X. How

to mediate between such rival irreconcilables? Such is the problem before President Johnson.

Religious Assassination

In this so tangled a situation, where does religion come in? For the connection between religion and racialism in the present day USA, is certainly close. The Black Muslims claim to be militant followers of Muhammed, and to condemn white supremacy in the name of a Semitic prophet who flourished in 7th century Arabia (c570-632). It is perhaps also relevant to note that the leader of even the moderate non-violent Negro racialists, is a clergyman, the Reverend Martin Luther King. How far the present-day Black Muslims (as also their late breakaway offspring, Malcolm X) are *bona fide* Muslims, recognised at such headquarters of Muslim orthodoxy as, say, Mecca or Cairo, does not seem very clear at present. For certainly orthodox Islam, like orthodox Christianity is a cosmopolitan religion with a world-wide following and not a purely tribal cult of the chosen race like, say, Judaism or Shintoism. In Muhammed, as in Christ, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, white nor black". Indeed we would be inclined to suppose that Islam, a democratic creed without any priestly caste, is probably less racial in composition than is Christianity. For the cult of the Koran does not seem ever to have permanently allied itself with any ethnic group, anything like as closely as did Christianity with the white races throughout the heyday of European Imperialism.

However, Black Muslims in the peculiarly inflamed conditions of the present-day USA, may have used the creed of Muhammed as a convenient alibi under which to stage their racial crusade against the white infidels, just as, say, German Catholicism used the essentially pagan ideology of Nazi Germany in order to smash its public enemy number one—atheistic Communism.

Be that as it may, Islam is no stranger to violence. The Jihad (or Holy War) has always been its last and sometimes its first line of resistance when the cult of the Koran was endangered by aggressive infidels. Nor for that matter, has assassination been unknown in Islam; Malcolm X had many Muslim predecessors. It is surely relevant to recall that the very word "assassin" itself, was originally derived from a heretical Ismailite Muslim sect domiciled in Persia

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Abraham Lincoln and Malcolm X

By F. A. RIDLEY

and Syria in the 12th and 13th centuries, whose theocratic chief, the Sheik-al-Jebal (the "Old Man of the Mountain" as the Christian crusaders called him) sent out professional killers habitually drugged with hashish to murder inimical Muslim and Christian potentates. Our word "assassin" is derived from the drug, hashish—viz. *haghighin*. It may also be relevant to add that the Jesuits also introduced a technique of religious assassination during the Counter-Reformation. If the killer of Malcolm X was a Muslim—a black or white, orthodox or heretical—it is clear that

he and Malcolm X had many predecessors.

Meanwhile we are left with an ominous centenary. In 1865 the first phase of the racial war in the USA, black versus white, was sealed with the blood of Abraham Lincoln. In 1965, what looks increasingly like the opening of the second phase in this self-same racial war appears to have been sealed with the blood of Malcolm X. For whoever the killer, and whatever his precise motive, the direct result can only be new outbursts of interracial violence and of perhaps inter-Negro conflict.

Bitter Pill

A (completely imaginary) conversation between Jehovah,
Pope John, and a young priest

By TOM PRICE

Jehovah—Well, son, you've done it this time. If they don't give you the sack I reckon they'll send you to the Congo. And I can tell you that it's going to be as hot as h--- out there again before long.

Pope—Don't scare him, Father. He's done a mighty fine job on this birth control thing. Some of those layabouts in the Vatican needed a shake-up like this. They haven't a clue when it comes to public relations. If you hadn't called me up Here, I was on the brink of doing something similar to what this young lad's done. Of course, I would have been a bit more discreet . . . something on the lines of "You can use the Pill as long as you use it in the Holy Safe Period, and as long as you buy it from your Holy Priest, so that any Holy Profit goes to the Holy Church". That way, everybody would be happy . . .

Jehovah—Rubbish. You people have always been too touchy about birth control. You made a big mistake in dithering about it when it was invented. Celibacy is a lot of bunk. I shall always regret that He—I mean I—never found a bonny young Jewish girl way back in BC. Or was it AD? I could never make sense of your crazy calendar.

Young priest—I only told the truth . . .

Pope—Truth? My boy, nobody knows the truth, especially when it comes to s-e-x. That's dynamite, my boy. Better left alone. Trouble is, those priests seem to be obsessed with it. People keep harping on it in the confessional and before you know where you are—wham! Revolution in the presbytery!

Young priest—Women are not childbearing machines, and . . .

Pope—Women, women! They're the cause of all the damn trouble. I wish . . .

Jehovah—Careful, Johnnie me boy. Remember that woman was my idea. I did a natty job of rib-plucking there. And don't forget that you wouldn't be here if it wasn't for women. Aha! Just think, if they'd had the Pill in those days, you might not be living it up up Here now, playing your harp like a little demon. I tell you this—I'd rather hear a good prima donna any day than your eternal plinking and plonking.

Pope—I always preferred boy sopranos. But what You fail to remember, Old Man, is that if you let the women have their heads they'll be taking over in no time. Look what's happened to the nonconformists and all that lot . . . women in the pulpits, women preaching sermons, women taking the collections . . .

Young priest—Well, I see no objection to women . . .

Jehovah—Hah! He'll be turning everything topsy-turvy if you don't watch him. De you all good! I like a rebel

. . . used to be one Meself in the old days. But remember this, young man. You're very lucky to be born of woman in enlightened times like these. I can remember when it used to positively reek up here with the fumes of disobedient priests. Some of those old popes, present company excepted, used to report to Me in two simple words—"Frying tonight". Quite fun it was, especially when it turned out that the ones that were fried came up Here and the other fat fools went Down There. Still always remember that your betters don't like you to talk to the newspapers. I never did it Meself, I used to engrave My pronouncements on bits of stone or gold and leave 'em on a mountain. If anybody pinched the copyright, that was their business . . .

Young priest—To get back to the subject . . .

Pope—I'm fed up to the teeth with the subject. To coin a phrase, go thou, and sin no more.

Jehovah—And if thou canst not be good, be jolly careful.

Religious Instruction Bill

EVERY year a well-meaning legislator presents a bill in Philippine Congress intended to make religious instruction a part of the public school curricula. Every year, therefore, we have to remind the pious congressman to read the Philippine Constitution. Paragraph 3 of Section 23, Article VI, states:

"No public property or money shall ever be appropriated, applied, or used directly or indirectly, for the use, benefit, or support of any sect, church, denomination, sectarian institution or system of religion or for the use, benefit or support of any priest, preacher, minister, or other religious teacher or dignitary as such, except when such priest, preacher, minister or other religious teacher or dignitary is assigned to the armed forces or to any penal institution, orphanage, or leprosarium."

In this year's Congressional Session, 1965, it is Representative Miguel Cuenco of Cebu who is presenting another religious instruction bill, on the strength of a little clause smuggled into Section 5 of Article XIV of the Philippine Constitution. The inserted clause, obviously intended to nullify the prohibition in Article VI, states:

"Optional religious instruction shall be maintained in the public schools as now authorised by law."

All past sponsors of previous religious instruction bills depended on the support of this little stowaway in Section 5 of Article XIV. How this item sneaked into the Philippine Constitution should be investigated by competent secular legislators.

MRA and Its Open Secrets

By F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

It is difficult to claim that the critical reader is likely to find any attraction in the apologetics of Moral Re-Armament. The movement has long been shrouded in a semi-mystery which has a suggestion of the sinister. It has stood out for sheer political reaction and, under the guise of semi-morality mixed with semi-religion, it has proved to be very much a weapon of the anti-Communist front. MRA is nothing more than the extreme of the right wing, seeking to attack the progressive forces of an emerging secularist and scientific culture. Such a position is difficult in its very nature to present in terms of attractive apologetics. On the moral side, few would be impressed by the one-sided *New Morality* of Sir Arnold Lunn and Mr. Gareth Lean. Its influence upon the BMA has been not a little suspect. Much of its propaganda takes the form of half-truths or of statements widely open to challenge. The assumption of moral and spiritual superiority ends by becoming merely nauseating. But it must be admitted that a new book, *The Open Secret of MRA*, by the Rev. J. P. Thornton Duesbury, Master of St. Peter's College, Oxford, is of a different order. The author has lived out a quiet life among dons and is, in a sense, a leave-over from the days of forty years ago when Frank Buchman made his great onslaught upon Oxford University. The Master writes quietly and without the moral hysteria so often associated with MRA publications. He sets out to make a case for MRA and to justify his position.

At the outset, the Master is unfortunate. Several years ago, Mr. Tom Driberg published a small pamphlet attacking the movement. It is this pamphlet which the present book seeks to answer. But Mr. Driberg has not relied upon a short statement. He has followed up his attack recently in a full-length book which presents a case for the prosecution of unanswerable quality. Many of the pleadings of the Master of St. Peter's College are answered heavily in this work and there is no need to go over the same ground again. In the end, the case comes down to the same issue. MRA believes in moral absolutes which it sums up finally under four main headings. It applies these absolutes in practical life.

Leaving aside, the contentious questions as to whether these absolutes really demand their proper application in sexual hysterics and extreme right wing politics, the vital question is whether such absolutes have any real existence at all. For the humanist, they simply do not exist. He can only have experience of the universe as he knows it. The history of morality, sexual or otherwise, is that of widely differing moral systems in different societies and centuries. Even within nominally Christian social orders, moral demands have changed and evolved. Various moral systems cancel each other out. One need only contrast the introspective pacifism of much oriental religious morality with the extrovert militancy shown by that of Islam. Some societies have been monogamous and some polygamous. In some moral orders, personal possession plays a part not to be traced in others. Some show a great respect for all life which is not seen in others. In short, morality appears as the particular formulation of a particular society at a particular time. The formulation itself will be the product of social and economic causes. Absolutes become the abstractions of the human mind personifying and abstracting so that, in the end, some sort of transcendental belief emerges. The absolutes of Mr. Thornton Duesbury are in no better case than are other moral absolutes and, as a

basic belief, the MRA standpoint collapses upon this very point.

I do not intend to follow the author through the details of his case for the defence. It has already been answered in considerable detail by Mr. Driberg. One can only express surprise that a person of such obvious integrity as the Master of St. Peter's is not moved to a far greater suspicion by the nature of the charges and the shuffling sort of reply which commonly emerges from MRA circles. For example, the links with Hitler are too clear and well-known to be explained away. But we do wish to take up the Master upon his particular treatment of the case of "K". As an undergraduate, "K" was a prominent member of the Groups in Oxford. He later turned against them and supplied much material to the Bishop of Durham, Dr. Hensley Henson, who wrote a famous attack upon the Group Movement some thirty years ago. The Master suggests that "K" was always unstable and goes on to mention that, according to a quotation from the *Daily Express* early in 1943, he was sentenced to "three years' hard labour" for importuning men in Piccadilly Circus. After this incident, Dr. Henson quoted him no more and "K" faded out of the picture. It might be assumed that "K" was an utterly unstable person and that it was upon this rotten pillar that Dr. Henson rested much of his case.

Actually, there is a mass of material in Dr. Henson's book which did not come from "K" at all. But, unfortunately, very few of the readers of the present book will have heard of "K's" existence. It just happens that I was at Oxford at the same time and knew "K" very well. He was a prominent member of the Groups, an extremely pushful individual who had taken a good first degree in history and was very popular and well-known among the Evangelical clergy of Oxford. Certainly, his religious associates pushed him forward as a prominent figure, and gave no hint that they knew him to be in any way unstable.

"K" claimed to have been disgusted by what he saw and heard on a Buchmanite tour, kept a careful diary, seceded from the Group Movement when he returned home, and supplied Dr. Henson with a great deal of information at first-hand. The cry that "K" was unstable now came from the Groupers, but he was still much in favour with the Evangelical clergy of Oxford, and regarded as one of their coming men. He was merely one of the many ex-Groupers who were to be found in Oxford at that time, and who, as such, were made the subject of bitter attack by their former associates. From the wider world, there was still no hint of instability. "K" was then ordained and was appointed to a series of important ecclesiastical posts in a northern diocese at an extremely early age. Presumably, his bishop and his clerical associates did not believe him to be in the least unstable. Finally came the catastrophe of Piccadilly Circus. Mr. Thornton Duesbury should have checked his facts. No magistrate has the power to award the sentence which he mentions. The magistrate did accuse "K" of committing perjury and, despite the fact that various bishops and deans were dragged through the witness-box to testify to "K's" character, he received a sentence of three months' hard labour. Incidentally, did "K's" clerical friends who appeared in court on his behalf believe him to be unstable? If so, what right had they to give such evidence?

(Concluded on page 84)

This Believing World

Humanists are to be allowed to state their objections to Christianity from the pulpit of St. George's Church, Edgbaston, Birmingham, at a series of lunchtime services on Wednesdays during Lent. P. Sargant Florence, Professor Emeritus of Birmingham University, A. F. M. Brierley, Lecturer at the Birmingham College of Commerce, and F. G. Lyne, Chairman of the Birmingham Humanist Group are among those who will speak for ten minutes (*The Birmingham Post*, February 25th). They will be answered by the Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. J. L. Wilson; Dr. Wiliam Strawson, Professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy at Handsworth Methodist Theological College; Canon William Purcell, head of religious broadcasting for the Midland Region of the BBC; and the Rev. Donald Tyther, Rural Dean of Smethwick. The procedure was called for by the times in which we live, said the Vicar of St. George's, the Rev. George Browning; there were so many uncertainties about what people thought that it was "better that they should be talked about in church". It was, so far as he knew, the first time that Humanists had been given such an opportunity to present their case. A buffet lunch would be provided after each service.

★

It sounds almost like a horrid case of lese majestie. Here we have Dr. John Heenan just made a glorious Cardinal, and at the same time two upstart Roman Catholic priests are not only advising Catholic women to use artificial contraceptives if they want to, but one of them doing so in the Roman Catholic journal *The Tablet*. Cardinal Heenan is the great anti-birth-control champion in the Church of Rome, its Bayard *sans peur*, and it must have been more than heartbreaking for him to be thus betrayed by his own comrades.

★

Fortunately, the Vatican has ways of dealing with such betrayals, and it has promptly sent the recalcitrants into retreat, where they will be allowed to repent and pray to Almighty God in pain and sorrow. In the meantime, we note (*Daily Mail*, February 27th) that a Catholic woman who has a large family and who wanted to "receive the sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion", was sent away by two priests. Why? Well, this sinner had actually "had an operation for sterilisation"—something too awful to contemplate.

★

A leaflet published by the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, entitled "God's Representatives to the Animals" is based on a sermon delivered by the Rev. B. Viney, and gives, we are told "the case against vivisection from the Christian standpoint", with many references to God and his animals. Anti-vivisectionists often drag in Jesus at their meetings as if he were the greatest anti-vivisectionist who ever lived. They stick to their guns though "our Lord" hardly mentions animals.

★

The fact is that Jesus never said a word against "nature red in tooth and claw", and certainly never protested against any cruelty to animals by man. One of his most famous commands was, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine"—in both cases reflecting his contempt for animals. The custom was in his day, and probably still is to refer to them in most uncomplimentary terms.

★

We cannot help wondering what the Church's attitude is now, to the literal acceptance of miracle. Here, for

instance, is Dr. John Robinson, the Bishop of Woolwich, writing in the *Sunday Mirror* a number of articles on Christian problems brilliantly, but thoroughly confusing all genuine believers in Christianity as it has been known in history. To call, as he does, "sharing" something or other a "miracle", is delightfully disingenuous.

★

But the sturdy unbelief in miracles of the Rev. J. Lowe of Southend must surely disturb even Dr. Robinson. Miracles "are only figurative examples to illustrate deeper truths", Mr. Lowe says, and we regret to add that he won't accept the famous drunkard's dream of Jesus turning water into wine, nor the Resurrection, the most marvellously attested historical fact in history. On the other hand, Dr. Robinson begs us to believe that "there is nothing love cannot do"—whatever that means—and "no limit can be set to the power of the Spirit of God", whatever that also means, for we don't know.

MRA AND ITS OPEN SECRETS

(Concluded from page 83)

"K" appealed to the Quarter Sessions and secured the reduction of his sentence to a fine and binding-over. But this is not the end of the story. A certain south country bishop had been one of the prominent Evangelical clergy at Oxford in "K's" time and must have had many an opportunity of deciding whether or not his young friend was unstable. "K" had been forced to resign his clerical appointments upon conviction by the Quarter Sessions, but this particular bishop was now to come to the rescue. "K" was not unfrocked, and so he was free to be appointed domestic chaplain to the bishop and to be sent around the diocese conducting various religious services. Did this bishop believe him to be unstable? The end of the story came with "K's" sudden death from a heart attack round about the end of the war, whilst he was still chaplain to the bishop in question.

I have concentrated upon the sordid story of "K" because Mr. Thornton Duesbury raised it anew in his book. It is certainly not my desire to dig up a long past scandal, and the unhappy man died many years ago. But I have taken the liberty of filling in the gaps in the story merely to point out that this sort of thing simply will not do. Because a parson leaves the movement, it does not mean that he is unstable. Indeed, change of thought may well suggest that men are mentally and critically alive. Again, if some piece of evidence is to be resurrected or a critic attacked, the whole story should be told. I do not think much of Mr. Thornton Duesbury's critical methods in dealing with the story of "K". It leaves me wondering how much more of his "open secret" is really a half-story. This doubt alone causes me to place his book on the shelf beside so much other MRA propaganda, of which Mr. Driberg has shown the true worth as factual narrative. The whole sequence of its apologetics is a sad comment upon a movement which claims to seek the moral rearming of the world.

[N.B. I have followed Mr. Thornton Duesbury's example in telling the "K" story with strict anonymity. It is an old scandal and I have no desire whatever to cause pain to people who are still living. But, if I am challenged by MRA or anybody else as to the accuracy of my facts, I am in a position to give "Ks" full name and college, the diocese in which he received his clerical appointments and their nature, and the name of the south country bishop and his diocese. I trust that this will not become necessary—F.H.A.M.]

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London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12—2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead).—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead).—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Glasgow Secular Society (Central Halls, 25 Bath Street), Sunday, March 14th, 3 p.m.: HUGH MACDIARMID, "Religion and Irreligion in Scottish Life and Literature".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, March 14th, 6.30 p.m.: EDMUND TAYLOR, "The Greek Vision of Pre-History".

Manchester Branch NSS (Wheatsheaf Hotel, High Street), Sunday, March 14th, 7.30 p.m. A meeting.

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, March 14th, 7.30 p.m.: Mrs. E. VENTON, "Humane Education".

Richmond and Twickenham Humanist Group (Room 5, Community Centre, Sheen Road), Thursday, March 18th, 8 p.m. A meeting.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, March 14th, 11 a.m.: JEAN GRAHAM-HALL, "The Problem of Vandalism".

Tuesday, March 16th, 7.30 p.m.: G. N. DEV, "The Problem of Immigration".

Surbiton and Malden & Coombe and Kingston Branches NSS (The White Hart, Kingston Bridge, Hampton Wick), Friday, March 12th, 8 p.m. A meeting.

University of Manchester Union (Oxford Road), Friday, March 12th, 7.30 p.m.: Debate, "This House Believes Easter To Be Irrelevant". DAVID TRIBE and Others.

Notes and News

THE newly-created Cardinal Heenan arrived back in London with his red hat and a message from the Pope that "there should be an end to public discussion on contraception". We were informed, the Cardinal said, "that it was not for us to make further public statements on the subject" (*The Guardian*, 1/3/65). He proceeded, therefore, to discuss the safe subject of the use of the vernacular in the mass which, he didn't doubt, caused genuine distress of mind and soul. It was true that something was lost by having an English liturgy, but the Pope and the bishops were convinced that it would be an immense gain to the majority of the faithful if their mother tongue were used.

★

FATHER JOSEPH COCKER, the 25-year-old priest of St. Mary's, Ryde, Isle of Wight, whose birth control article in *The Tablet* led to his suspension, didn't share Cardinal Heenan's willingness to sweep the matter of contraception

to one side. Father Cocker thought that "reasonable discussion must be allowed to take place, and not banned as it has been" (*The Birmingham Post*, 26/2/65). He had met many families who had "suffered very greatly over this matter" and it caused "very many Catholics" to leave the Church. The conflicting reactions of two Catholic mothers to the Father McMahon controversy will be found on page 87.

★

NOR, it seems, does Archbishop Roberts believe in quietly accepting the embargo on birth control discussion. In his introduction to *Contraception and Holiness* (due to appear shortly in this country) the Archbishop makes what the *Observer* (28/2/65) called "a thinly veiled reference" to Cardinal Heenan and his "unprecedented attack" on the theological authors of the schema on "The Church in the Modern World", with their "understanding and sympathetic account of modern problems in marriage". *Contraception and Holiness*, a symposium of ten essays by priests and laymen, "all of whom plead that it should be the right of the individual to determine what method of contraception he or she should use", has already appeared in the USA, where it was praised by the liberal Catholic magazine *Commonweal*. "No matter what Pope Paul and the Vatican Council say about birth control," said the reviewer John T. Elson, "the Catholic attitude toward the problem can never be the same".

★

CATHOLIC reaction to the birth control sketch on *Not So Much A Programme* was, however, exactly as might be predicted. The very idea of depicting a "bog" priest interrogating a Liverpool-Irish wife about her pregnancy-free year! (Had she sinned?) Norman St. John Stevas deplored it at the time (wasn't the Vatican Council considering the problem?) but had much the worse of the subsequent argument with Dee Wells (Mrs. A. J. Ayer). Other Catholic MPs like Simon Mahon complained to the BBC, whose Director-General, Sir Hugh Greene, regretably felt it necessary to apologise for the sketch. In the Lords, the faithful Lord Longford confessed himself "staggered" at a programme that was "dirty beyond belief". It could not, he said, "have been put on by some producer merely in a fit of aberration". And it was "really criminal" that it should ever have been screened. But the criminal thing, as we see it, is that the sketch should need to be screened.

★

THERE was considerable controversy in the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Scotsman*, following the Scottish Christian Youth Assembly in Edinburgh (THE FREETHINKER, 26/2/65), largely concerning a resolution describing God in Tillichian terms. Perhaps it is intelligent language to say that "God is found in the very depths of our being" or "in personal relationships", wrote John Wilson of Motherwell (*The Glasgow Herald*, 23/2/65), but for him it was meaningless—"just a nice, poetic meaningless expression". On the same day in the *Scotsman*, the Rev. A. H. Forbes of Carnoustie, found nothing in the resolution at variance with "the spirit of either the Old or the New Testament," though Alastair M. Caine of Edinburgh thought that it "virtually rejected Christ".

★

WE have not yet seen the film, *Young Cassidy*, which is based on the early life of Sean O'Casey, but we can well believe with Kenneth Tynan (*The Observer*, 28/2/65) that it is "O'Casey spruced up for export". All "disturbing excesses are banished", Mr. Tynan said; and where is there, he asked—in the script, the direction or the acting—the "faintest hint" that Sean O'Casey was "a passionate Communist and a virulent anti-Catholic?"

Survival of the Social Group—A Principle of Ethics

By JAMES J. THOMPSON

(Concluded from page 76)

AFTER our Palaeolithic ancestors discovered a connection between coition and the birth of children, sex codes were introduced to ensure that new members of society could be reared by those who had begot them rather than by society. The chances for the survival of early societies must have depended largely on their populations; hence a ruler desired sway over as many people as possible, over as large an army as possible. Hence if anyone were to obtain sexual gratification without making a baby, the ruler might feel cheated and imperilled, and would therefore enact laws strictly forbidding such acts as homosexuality, onanism, auto-erotism, and would instruct his priests to condemn them with dire preachments and to describe in the sacred literature the destruction of cities for sodomy with fire and brimstone. Today, as a population explosion threatens, all attitudes towards sex are becoming far more tolerant.

The basic aim of education is not, as educationists so often assert, the perfection of the individual, but rather the preservation of society and the state, for without education a people would revert to barbarism. Education is more necessary to the survival of the state than armies and navies are, for whilst armies and navies protect against enemies without, a state lacking education would crumble from within, since all its industry, its commerce, its professions, its whole culture would inevitably end. An educational fallacy that has persisted through the ages is that the survival of culture requires indoctrination, in the tribal beliefs, in whatever the most influential persons or groups wanted the new generation to be. It is now becoming clearer that this is an error, and that the purposes and advancement of society, indeed of humanity, are better served by an education based on intellectual freedom with which children would be relieved of dogmatism from the time when they first enter the infants' schools, and would be permitted and encouraged to learn by concluding for themselves with no compulsion to conformity. The moral education of children, with the system of ethics here outlined, might be best accomplished by pupil autonomy in the classroom.

Why are there nations? When our Neolithic ancestors snatched a precarious existence from the pursuit of wild game, they probably often went hungry; and when they learned the pastoral life of domesticating animals and of wandering as nomads to new pastures, they regarded no part of the earth as particularly theirs, and the ideas of private property in land or of national territory did not occur to them. It was when men learned agriculture that they regarded the land they tilled as their own, to be protected against other people that dire necessity prompted to encroach upon the domain of others. Thus probably arose the notions of nation and nationality, of one's own territory and that of others, of the citizen and the alien. Thus arose also international relations, international commerce, international disputes and international warfare. Today's civilisation is agriculturally based. There could be no cities if there were no farms. Agriculture caused permanent settlement, buildings, cities, nations. Basically, the need is the need for food. The nation enables society to feed its members, and thus enables them to live.

Conflicts between societies, resulting in the hostilities of war, result from two errors: confusion about what constitutes or should constitute a society; and social indoctrina-

tion. Because this basic principle of ethics, the survival of society, is in the minds of most people not clearly defined nor even explicitly stated, and because fallacious doctrines of the nature and origin of morality rather are proposed to and uncritically accepted by them, people are prone to confuse society in general with some particular forms of society, and to use the vaguely recognised, implicit maxim that society must survive to mean that some particular form of society must survive against the competition of other forms. Here, people confuse society with the monarchy; in various places they confuse society with Capitalism, or Communism, or the Muslim faith, or the Hindu faith, or the Hebrew faith, or the Christian faith. They confuse society with their way of living, believe that Africans should wear European clothing and adopt European customs, and that the Brazilian natives are immoral to be completely naked. The German Nazis believed they would become rich by destroying cities and means of production and commerce of other countries, and by purifying their society by exterminating members who were different. People in a society are not permitted to think reasonably about these matters because it is customary everywhere to a greater or less extent to control belief by indoctrination. The Hindu of India must hate the Muslim of Parkistan. The Arab must hate the Jew. Capitalists must not allow Communism to exist, nor Communist doctrines to be advocated. Americans cannot withdraw their arms from Vietnam because of the indoctrination in Communist China. Peaceful co-existence with Russia is not possible because of the indoctrination in the United States. Neither armament nor disarmament will prevent the next war; for neither clarifies the fundamental misunderstandings which underlie hostility. The most promising and hopeful proposal for world peace is a kind of education which would be free from indoctrination.

Three motives of human conduct include: the instinct of self-preservation which effects the survival of the individual; the sex instinct, the survival of the species; and morality, the survival of society. Ethics might form a philosophical foundation for sociology, much as epistemology can furnish a philosophical foundation for science.

Ethical theory should be more than an intellectual pastime—it should be applicable to problems of human living. Clarification of these bases of right and wrong may help in the fight against delinquency; for if it were possible to justify a reasonable explanation of morality it would be possible to give children in school a moral education based on logical reasons rather than on the empty preachments or authoritarian dictates of today's classrooms. There should exist also a social ethics, a national ethics, an international ethics: morality at present is thought to be limited to the social acts of individuals. If humanity is to survive the atomic age, the world needs an ethics for international relations, and this is a grave deficiency of conventional morality. The theory here proposed may lend itself admirably to this application. Wars are not all unjustified. Pacifism can not be a moral rule. If the world agrees upon logical moral principles, it is easier to arbitrate disputes among nations. As technical civilisation becomes ever more complex, ever more powerful, it becomes ever more necessary for people to perceive clearly the real roots of proper human relations.

To recapitulate: why should society survive? Because

if it did not, humanity would be reduced to the solitary life of the worm, and morality would not even exist. Why should this not be? Because the survival of the individual is better assured by living in society. Why should the individual survive? This is the question which cannot be answered with present knowledge: why living things exist on the earth, why there is any earth, why living things are self-perpetuating and self-propagating, why each individual plant and animal does the things that are needed for life, why each clings so tenaciously to life, why living things live, these are questions which perhaps the future may answer. But they are outside the scope of ethics. The ethical system here proposed is complete and closed within itself, for if there is to exist any ethics and morality at all, then society must exist and survive. If two or three people come together, their first duty is to do such things as continue their association: if they kill one another, then society ends; if they steal from one another so that nobody can possess anything, each will take his belongings and go his way; if none can believe what another says, communication becomes impossible and the association disintegrates. We need a morality simply because we live in society, because we interact one with another, and only for that reason.

Because these ideas have not been given explicit formulation but are only vaguely recognised, people become confused and wrongly ascribe morality to other sources. This confusion leads people to resist change of social forms, even when changes are wise and desirable. The tendency to cling to forms and to preserve them is the core of the Capitalist-Communist controversy which threatens to devastate the earth. It would be by clarifying such matters that the minds of men could be enlightened and their social problems be solved.

Where the Bushes Grow

My brother died while he was on holiday in France with a party of his schoolmates. They sent his baggage to me at the presbytery as our parents are dead—a leather valise and a canvas holdall. I was stricken with grief. As a young priest I'd been too busy with my first parish to give my young brother much attention, yet I should have taken our parents' place in his life. Of course I'd been sure that the priests at his school had been keeping a strict eye on his spiritual welfare, all the same I felt I had failed in a duty. It was some days, then, before I could bring myself to go through his things; and then I found the green envelope with the postcards. They are, I suppose, only mildly dirty: nude women on sofas, hearth rugs and eastern divans. But there is a pale one, with a flesh fragile and rosy. I wouldn't give tuppence for the dark toothy amazons with the yellow or marble skins, but the girl with the fragile rosy flesh . . . Well, I felt that my brother must have been stirred, although I did not believe that he had lost his innocence. There are men at the French ports who pester visitors to buy things before they know what they are buying. Nevertheless, I should have torn up the cards at once. But I couldn't. They are a souvenir, all I will have left after I've given the clothes to my poor parishioners.

I was thinking about my parishioners when I was standing in the hall and apparently looking at the newspaper which had just been delivered. My housekeeper came up behind me. "Is there any news, Father?" she asked in her soft lazy voice. I meant to give her a curt answer, but I suddenly realised that she has the same rosy skin as the girl on the postcard. So we were looking at one another for a moment without saying anything, and then my eyes

dropped towards her apron. "I'm going down to the village to buy some wool," she said; and I knew what she meant, that she'd be walking across the field with the bushes.

I heard her going down the back path, but it seemed as if she wasn't going away from me but coming nearer. I went into the garden to calm myself, as I felt ill and ashamed that I could think such thoughts with my brother so recently dead. Then I thought that he had died before he had had time to make love to women. Could it be that as I now reproached myself for having been a bad father to him, I ought to make amends by representing him in the fields where the bushes grow? Maybe . . . it is my duty . . .

OSWELL BLAKESTON

The Father McMahon Controversy

The Birmingham Post, the paper in which Father Arnold McMahon's article defending contraception appeared, has naturally received a large number of letters on the subject, a selection of which were printed on February 26th. We, in turn offer a selection of points from the published correspondence.

The fact that I shall soon give birth to my ninth child in 12 years, proves to us that to have a large family is what God requires of us. We have done our best to limit our family by the rhythm method, but so far without success. Even the efforts of the Catholic Family Planning Clinic, so successful with others, have failed to help us so far. So we welcome each new baby with love and faith, and always our finances have improved sufficiently to enable us to cope.

—R.A.

My husband and I practise birth control but I, as the Catholic party, do not confess it, as I do not feel that I have committed a sin, as I have borne three children whom I feel able to care for properly. Not being worn out by indiscriminate child-bearing, my conscience is clear and I feel it is a matter between me, my conscience and my God.

—Mother of Three (Birmingham 17)

Fr. McMahon is regarded by his superiors as "inexperienced" and as having "no wealth of pastoral experience to draw from". One wonders, however, what experience can impel the Roman Catholic hierarchy to expound their tenet on birth control in this self-assured way. How can men who have no knowledge of the emotional and financial strains of marriage and of bringing up a family dictate on this matter?

—Derrick W. Mortimer (Sutton Coldfield)

The point is that, apart from the last six or 12 months, millions of Catholics have lived and died believing that contraception was wrong (and, in fact, seriously wrong). What sort of a Church of Christ would it have been all those centuries if it had been wrong about this major moral issue?

—Bill Ensor (Coleshill)

For over 2,000 years humanists have tried to see this world from a man-centred viewpoint and have said, in effect, that man himself makes his own gods to suit his needs. What is happening now in the Roman Catholic Church is inevitable. God's "image" is having to be reshaped to fit man's needs.

—F. G. Lyne, Chairman, Birmingham Humanist Group

To denigrate the young priest on account of his youth and academic background is hardly valid, however, when one considers that very many more mature clergy hold similar views. Archbishop Roberts, who is certainly not immature, was recently prevented from speaking at Foyles literary luncheon in connection with an article he had contributed to a book on the subject of birth control and with particular relevance to India. He has [a] wealth of pastoral experience . . .

—Cradle Catholic (Staffordshire)

I am putting forward what I believe to be the ordinary, accepted viewpoint when I say that the Roman Catholic conception of

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marriage is regarded as backward and lacking in the ideals and humanity which are now accepted as a part of marriage elsewhere.

—Lucy Shires (Tasley)

We deplore the fact that the *Birmingham Post* is making front page sensationalism out of what has proved to be an injudicious article by a young and inexperienced Catholic priest. "Summoned to Rome" in large headlines meant no more, when one read further, than "advised to go to Rome to discuss what he had written with his superiors"—

(Mrs.) Adelaide Burns

(Mrs.) Margaret M. Byrne (Birmingham 15)

Jesus Christ was a young man with "no high academic qualifications; no long experience in the care of souls; no graduate degrees in theology; no wealth of pastoral experience to draw from". He, too, upset his "superiors" by expressing His own views instead of just being a mouthpiece for theirs.

—(Mrs.) Kathleen N. Foden (Streethay)

CORRESPONDENCE

MARXISM

Mrs. E. Ebury in her letter (26/2/62) seems to think I am up against my old bogey, but I can assure her that Marxism is no bogey for me.

What Mrs. Ebury says in her letter about Calvin and Hitler does not in the least affect any of my arguments. In fact, what she says about Calvin is elementary. What a Calvin would be today has nothing at all to do with my case against Marxism regarding the individual.

We all know that there must be certain circumstances present for exceptional individuals to arise, but you just can't explain exceptional individuals through material conditions. The material conditions could be there without producing the exceptional individual.

Mrs. Ebury brings chance into the Marxist view of history. Her problem now is to reconcile chance with historical laws. Perhaps when it suits her she will be all for chance, and when otherwise historical laws.

History may not be as scientific as Marxists make out after all, especially from Mrs. Ebury's view.

Of course, one could play acrobatic tricks with the dialectic and prove practically everything. Maybe that is what Mrs. Ebury had in mind when she brought in chance.

R. SMITH

R. Smith in his letter of February 12th criticises F. A. Ridley's views on Marx's Historical Materialism and, apart from asking a few questions, does little or nothing to point out where he thinks that Mr. Ridley is wrong. I fail to understand why Mr. Smith bothers to ask these questions at all, particularly when he gives the impression that he will reject the answers whatever they are. However, in spite of this, I think that some comment is necessary.

"To say that exceptional men influence history insofar as they reflect the ideas of their epochs becomes a piece of rubbish when at the same time you claim that the historical process would evolve essentially the same way independent of their existence or influence", Mr. Smith says. And he goes on to ask, "In what sense do exceptional individuals influence history, if as you have claimed in one of your letters, the whole historical process would evolve the same way independent of them?"

For Marx and Marxists the first guiding principle of Historical Materialism is that change and development in society, as in nature, take place in accordance with objective laws. As Newton revealed the Law of Gravity, so Marx revealed the Law of Social Change. In short, Marxists accept that everything that happens has a cause or causes, and could not have happened differently unless something in the cause or causes had also been different.

For materialism, matter and the material world is primary, while mind or thought is secondary and derivative. The existence and interrelationship of material things does not depend on our ideas of them; on the contrary, our minds and the ideas in our minds depend on the prior existence and interrelationship of material things. Applied to society, this means that the origin of all the views current in society lies in the conditions of material life of society, and not the other way round.

A common error made when considering these things is considering only external causes, only forms and their appearance. The material of society is an objective reality existing independently of the will of men, while the "spiritual" life of society, is a reflection of this objective reality. Hence the source of formation of the "spiritual" life of society, the origin of social ideas, social theories, political views and social institutions shouldn't be sought in the ideas, theories, views and social institutions themselves but in the conditions of the material life of society, of which these ideas, theories, views, etc., are the reflection.

However, this does not mean that, having arisen on the basis of material conditions, ideas play no part in the social activity whereby material conditions are changed. On the contrary, having arisen on the basis of material conditions, ideas become an active force reacting back upon material conditions. In considering such aspects of historical change, a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of society, which can be determined by objective laws of social transformation, and the political, religious, aesthetic etc., forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out.

"Exceptional individuals" whilst using their influence to exploit a particular event in history only do so within the economic framework of a given society and, whilst this in itself may bring about a qualitative change, it does in fact, do nothing to bring about the real transformation that history has produced.

STAN MILLS

ROBERT F. KENNEDY ON CHURCH AND STATE

I do believe, as my brother did, in the importance and vitality of the Constitutional direction that there be a separation of church and state and a freedom of religion which is real and sacred. I firmly endorse the views which the Supreme Court expressed during the last few years concerning this subject. I disagree with those of the Court's critics who seek Congressional action to undo what these Supreme Court decisions have accomplished.

Religion is, I believe, essentially a private affair. No person, and certainly no government, should interfere with the religious freedom of any person. Especially in a heterogeneous country such as ours, religious tolerance must be a commandment which we all follow. In sum, I believe in the fullest and most substantial support of the policies of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

—ROBERT F. KENNEDY

[Reprinted from *Church and State*, USA, January 1965.]

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The Freethinker

Volume LXXXV—No. 12

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

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It is interesting to notice how again and again clerical writers or speakers proclaim with confidence that their views upon marriage are at one with the law of England. The assumption is readily made that, in some way, the law of the country supports the conclusions of the theologians. It is asserted constantly that the law enshrines holy Christian matrimony, and that it provides an ample precedent for the revival of canon law. The fact that legal marriage in England is monogamous by its very nature has been seized upon by the clerics to give it a further character of supporting church orders. It is therefore not without interest to see what attitude the common and statute law actually takes up.

Any traditional western claim that no place could be given to the conception of divorce and remarriage, a position upon which the Church of England maintained an equivocal place from the Reformation onwards, was terminated by the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1857, which set up the modern divorce court and created statutory grounds for terminating a marriage and allowing remarriage whilst the other partner was still living. It should be noticed at once that the life and custom of the country is governed solely by common and statute law. There is no binding third system of ecclesiastical or canon law. The Church of England, as the established church of the country, stands beneath parliamentary authority and is bound by the legal system of the land. For example, any clergyman who implies that a couple remarried in a register office after a divorce from a previous partner are not legally married at all, may be sharply reminded of the existence of the law of defamation and its applicability to his case.

Permanent and Monogamous

After the 1857 Act, the case of *Hyde v. Hyde* (1866) LR1 P&D, 130, laid down the basis upon which the courts would consider the validity of a marriage and its binding quality. Giving judgment in that case, Lord Penzance said: "Marriage . . . may . . . be defined as the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others".

At first glance, this dictum might be thought to safeguard the ecclesiastical claim. But it must be scanned somewhat closely. In the first place, the marriage must be of a voluntary character. Few persons of any creed would disagree with this point. It is clearly contrary to public policy for a valid marriage to be entered upon by an insane or drunken person who did not know what he was doing. Again, it is contrary to public policy for a marriage to be contracted by means of duress, or against the will of one of the parties. Such purported unions are merely void *ab initio* at English law, and probably entail a criminal offence. Again, Lord Penzance demanded that the marriage should be lifelong. But this demand must be read in the context of the 1857 Act. It does not exclude certain marriages being regarded as voidable, nor does it exclude the provisions for divorce which were made by

the 1857 Act itself. All that Lord Penzance really said was that, at the time that the marriage was contracted, there was an intention that it should be permanent and that it must be monogamous. Up to a point, this dictum still defines the law of England. A purported marriage which had a time limit or private conditions laid upon it would be illegal and void. Again, it is impossible to contract a legal marriage in England which is other than monogamous, just as it is impossible to contract a valid marriage unless the conditions of notice and residence are fulfilled.

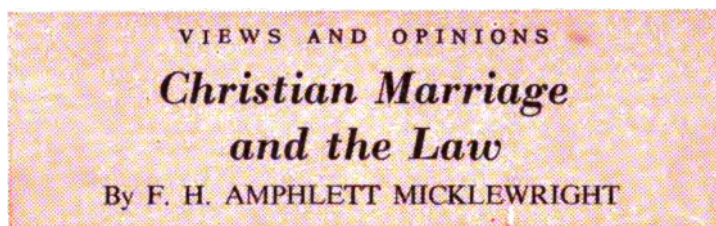
Not Theological

But Lord Penzance (then Sir J. P. Wilde) did enclose his definition of marriage within the qualification "as understood in Christendom", and it is this phrase which has been seized upon by the clerical apologists. Yet, once again, a moment's examination gravely weakens the point. A large section of Western Christendom does not accept remarriage after divorce, and is thereby at cross purposes with the judgment. As Professor Graveson interprets the point: "A Christian marriage means simply the type of institution generally accepted as marriage in those countries possessing a Western civilisation". In short, the phrase has no theological connotation whatever for the lawyer; it is on parallel with the well-known "Act of God" in tort cases. Two cases underline the major points.

A British subject and a Japanese woman underwent a monogamous marriage in Japan with Japanese rites which were clearly not Christian in any theological sense. Yet, in *Brinkley v Attorney-General* (1890), LR15 P&D, 76, this ceremony was held to fall within the jurisdiction of "Christian" marriage and the law of *Hyde v Hyde* was applied. A Muslim ceremony performed in England has been held to be a marriage for the purpose of requiring a registered building (*R. v. Rahman* [1949], 2 All ER 165). In the case of Islamic marriages contracted in England, the courts have held over and over again that their jurisdiction applies despite the Mohammedan teaching concerning polygamy, because English law is the proper law applying where domicile enters in, although this view was not extended to cover a case where the marriage was contracted in Egypt between a domiciled Egyptian and an Englishwoman. In 1924, the case of *Nachimson v Nachimson* (1930), AC 217, the fact that Soviet law permits divorce by consent at the wish of both parties did not prevent the English court from treating the union as a permanent, monogamous marriage.

No Machinery

In short, English marriage law has been guided at this stage by two points, neither of which has any essential connection with Christian theology. The first is that of the general tradition of the essentials of a valid marriage sanctioned by the common law of England since 1189. The common law set forth certain traditional limitations which excluded some unions from the scope of what could be regarded as "Christian" marriage in the sense in



which Lord Penzance used the term. Secondly, the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1857, related English divorce law solely to monogamous marriage, with the result that the English courts have no machinery at all for dealing with a polygamous union. The attitude of the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division towards such a union is not to discuss whether or not it is invalid, but to decline jurisdiction on the grounds of a want of machinery for dealing with the case in hand. This is a very different matter from taking up the negative attitude which would be sanctioned by the traditional Christian theology.

Polygamy

But it is impossible to leave the matter here. The rapid spread of Empire in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries raised vital questions concerning those colonies where polygamy was the local and legally accepted marriage custom. So far as the Churches were concerned, the polygamous marriages were regarded as an anti-Christian immorality and treated as such. It will be recalled that Bishop Colenso's first controversy with his fellow South African bishops in 1853 was on this very point. But this was not the legal attitude, and the matter became of more pressing moment after colonial appeals from the local courts had been directed in 1833 to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

This court has long given full recognition to a polygamous marriage where the proper law to be applied is the local municipal law of a region professing polygamy. The matter was well summed up by Lord Greene, MR in *Baindail v Baindail* (1946), AC 122: "The appellant, a domiciled Indian of Hindu faith, married first a Hindu woman in India and later, whilst his wife was still alive, went through the civil form of marriage in England with the respondent, a domiciled Englishwoman, describing himself to the Registrar of Marriages as a bachelor. The Hindu marriage was potentially polygamous. On discovering the previous marriage, the English wife petitioned for a decree of nullity on the ground that her husband was already married when he went through the English ceremony with her." The court granted a decree of nullity upon this ground, and thereby clearly treated as valid the potentially polygamous Hindu marriage in India. An interesting comment upon this situation was made by Barnard, J., in *Srini Vasan v Srini Vasan* (1945), 2 All ER 21, when he said: "To deny recognition of a Hindu marriage for the purpose in hand would, in my opinion, be to fly in the face of common sense, good manners and the ordered system of tolerance on which the Empire is based".

In this short summary, the learned judge clearly gave the *quietus* to any suspicion that the question in hand was to be considered from any other point of view than that of the private rules of English international law. Theological considerations merely did not arise in deciding the common sense questions involved in the case.

Mohammedan Marriage

It is interesting that, in a case still awaiting full reportage, *Reid v Attorney-General of Ceylon* (1965), the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has recently gone a good deal further. The appellant, a domiciled Cingalese, contracted a marriage in Ceylon with another domiciled Cingalese under Christian, monogamous law. He later became a Mohammedan and thereby changed his legal status. Treating his first marriage as potentially polygamous in retrospect, he took another wife under the Islamic legal system prevailing over the Mohammedans of Ceylon. The local courts decided that he could not do this, and upheld an indictment for bigamy. But this decision has now been reversed by the Judicial Committee

of the Privy Council, and the conviction quashed on the ground that the appellant was within his rights in following out this course of conduct. This decision means nothing less than that, under an appropriate system of legal geography, a person may contract out of the monogamous system and, by changing his legal status through a contracting into the polygamous system, may become validly active within this system. Although, as was remarked in court, such a decision would seem to be plain common sense within such an intermixture of races and creeds as exists in a country like Ceylon, it is clearly a blow at the Christian view that monogamy is of universal regard and demand. It must also be emphasised that the court accepted in every way the full validity of the polygamous Mohammedan marriage.

It is true that, apart from the exceptional case of a marriage within a foreign embassy in London, English law only recognises as valid a monogamous lifelong union. But the cases cited fully illustrate that such a proposition of fact itself does not extend to other areas of the Commonwealth where a system other than United Kingdom law operates as the proper law. It is interesting that the Family Allowances and National Insurance Act, 1946, accepts the same viewpoint. A factually monogamous marriage is recognised by this Act even though, if taking place outside the United Kingdom, it was contracted under a potentially polygamous system. Finally, there can be no doubt at all what an acceptable polygamous system is in the eyes of the decided cases. As Professor Graveson tersely puts the matter: "Whether a marriage is polygamous or monogamous in character should be determined by reference to the law of the place where the marriage ceremony takes place in relation to the particular form of marriage celebrated".

The whole subject is one which suggests a mass of legal technicalities. It may appear as of little interest to the layman. But it goes far to illustrate the fact that the theological idea of Christian marriage from the days of St. Paul onwards is not one which is accepted by the United Kingdom and Commonwealth courts as axiomatic for deciding the cases which they have to try. This fact alone is sufficient to illustrate the extent of misrepresentation involved in the common claim made by clerics that the secular law maintains Christian marriage. A stage has now been reached when the utilitarian demands of common sense are carrying the courts in one direction, whilst the more traditional Churches take their stand upon the canon law of the Medieval Western world. A technical subject provides one further wider illustration of the need for a fuller recognition of the state as secular and its marriage laws as determined by utilitarian motives.

The BBC and Freud

THE BBC's "Freud and the Freudians"—the first in a Viewpoint series on great Jewish thinkers who have challenged orthodox Christian ideas—televised on March 3rd, was deplorable. But then, as Maurice Richardson indicated in the *Observer* (7/3/65) the BBC "has always been frightened of Freud," and "producers of pop psychiatric programmes had orders to steer clear of orthodox psychoanalysts" who "were assumed to be wicked atheists, likely to contaminate the flock". This time, the Corporation ensured that little if any "challenge" to Christianity should be discernible. Nobody mentioned Freud's atheism nor that he wrote *The Future of an Illusion* about religion. Will "the opium of the people" be referred to in the next programme—on Marx on March 17th?

Maimonides: A Jewish Heretic

By JACOB TEICHER

ON the completion of Maimonides's Code of *Mishneh Torah*, in 1180, a committee of wealthy Jews in Cairo took the enlightened initiative of providing the Jewish communities in the east and west with copies of the work. Its success was spectacular and Maimonides's reputation as the greatest living rabbinic authority established.

Two theological statements, however, included in the first part of the Code, the *Book of Knowledge*, and regarded by the author as binding halachic decisions, were severely censured in about 1192 by Abraham ben David (Rabad), the leading talmudic scholar in France; and the great controversy about Maimonides, symptom of a deep-seated religious and intellectual crisis, the effects of which are still visible today, was set on its secular course.

In the *Book of Knowledge*, Maimonides, blending halacha¹ with philosophy, declared that it is heresy to believe that God has a body or a shape, and stressed that man's mind only will survive, where so deserved, after death. The traditional ideas concerning the Messianic time—resurrection of the body, reward and punishment after death and the notions of heaven and hell—were eschewed by Maimonides, who refused on halachic grounds, to make use in this connection of aggadic² and midrashic³ statements.

This is the crucial point; for Rabad rested his feet precisely on such statements in order to qualify Maimonides's denial of resurrection as being "very close to heresy" and to remark tartly that to believe that God has a body cannot be heresy, seeing that "men greater in authority and better" than Maimonides, who relied on the literal meaning of the Bible and aggadic statements, did believe it. This first round of the contest between Maimonides and his French opponent ended in a halachic draw; but Maimonides's statements, although not formally condemned as heretical, came out of it tarnished by a strong suspicion of heresy.

The second round, concerning resurrection only, was fought out in the early thirteenth century in Spain, on an abstruse theological point. Meir Abulafia of Toledo argued against Maimonides that, since God has the power of making miracles, He would also resurrect the bodies of the dead by miracle. The devastating retort to this argument was supplied by the Prince (Nasi), Sheshet ben Isaac of Saragossa, who observed that miracles can be recognised after they have happened but not before. This Spanish theological skirmish was again a stalemate, but the seed of strife between opponents and defenders of Maimonides had been planted in the communities.

A prolonged lull in the controversy followed, during which the translations of his philosophical work, the *Guide for the Perplexed*, from Arabic into Hebrew, gave a vigorous impetus to the intellectual activities of the Jews in France and Spain. With this, the author's reputation reached its height; but the opposition against him, which seemed to have passed, unexpectedly revived and took a serious turn.

Its leader, the talmudic scholar, Abraham of Montpellier and his disciples, Jonah Gorondi and David ben Saul, intent on putting an end to the propagation of Maimonides's views among the French Jews, adopted two momentous practical measures. They presented their case against Maimonides to the rabbis of Northern France and appealed to them to ban the *Book of Knowledge* and the *Guide* as heretical; the rabbis complied.

They also denounced the two books to the Christian Inquisition, installed in Montpellier in 1231, and their aim in so doing was achieved; the Inquisition duly condemned the books as heretical and burned them publicly in 1232-33. These two events stirred up again the conflict between the defenders and opponents of Maimonides, which determined the whole course of Jewish civilisation from the thirteenth century to the present day.

The historical details of the battle are extremely interesting; but it is more important to clarify the fundamental issue involved. To do this, the concrete question must be asked: Why was there a united front of French rabbis and the Christian Inquisition against Maimonides?

The answer lies in the recognition of the fact that the Inquisition in Montpellier proceeded against Maimonides because his *Book of Knowledge* and the *Guide* contained statements which are contrary to the Catholic faith. In the Middle Ages, Jews living in Christian countries were not free to profess views that were heretical in the eyes of the Church, unless such views were part of an established and undisputed Jewish religious tradition.

This was clearly not the case in regard to Maimonides's two statements in the *Book of Knowledge*, one about the corporeity of God and the other about the (implied) denial of resurrection. The former contradicted the dogma of the Incarnation and the latter the principal article of the Christian faith; both statements were heretical from the point of view of the Church, but both were contested by the Jews themselves.

The situation in regard to the *Guide* was identical. All the statements in that book, which were opposed by the Jews themselves, were identical with those which were also attacked by contemporary Christian theologians.

Maimonides's contentions, for example, that angels are not real beings and that the sacrifices were instituted by God merely as a means, with no intrinsic value in itself, to educate the Jewish people to a higher, spiritual level of religion, were rejected by the Christian theologians. The former contention on the ground that it destroyed the historical veracity of certain accounts in the Bible and the New Testament, and the latter on the ground that it undermined the basic Catholic conception of the sacrament of the Eucharist as a real sacrifice of Jesus, superceding the Biblical sacrifices. It is hardly surprising that both the *Guide* and the *Book of Knowledge* were burned by the Inquisition.

The Jewish opponents of Maimonides certainly did not reject his views on the ground that they contradicted the teaching of the Church. But they shared with the Christian adversaries the same theological outlook. They accepted as an article of faith, together with the Christian theologians, the literal meaning of the Bible. They believed in addition, and in analogy to the Christian doctrine of the spiritual meaning of the Bible, that the aggadic and midrashic explanations of the Bible were divinely inspired.

No wonder that they were united with the Christian theologians in combating Maimonides, whose theological

(Concluded on page 92)

1. The oral law.
2. *aggada*: the sequel to those parts of the Bible which include stories and chronicles, sayings of the wise and moral instructions.
3. *midrash*: the finding of new meaning, in addition to the literal one, in the scriptures.

This Believing World

We are not quite sure whether the petulant outcry of the Pope to Cardinal Heenan, that we should stop all this talk about contraception is directed only to Roman Catholics, or includes Protestants and non-religious people as well. But it surely represents a guiding-post as to what to expect if "unity" were established in Britain while the Pope remained in command with Cardinal Heenan as his lieutenant.

★

In the "South London Press" (February 26th) we find Canon H. G. Ockwell telling us quite seriously that "education without God and religion must lead to a lot of clever devils". The good Canon appears never to have visited HM prisons, most of whose inmates sturdily insist that they are Church of England and Roman Catholic delinquents. Indeed, most of them would resent being told that they have "no religion". Canon Ockwell should be able to get hold of some prison statistics to study, even if they are denied to Freethinkers.

★

So long as a picture of Christ on a cross can be shown in our national newspapers, so long will the story endure. It has always been a best seller, and the *Sunday Pictorial* (February 21st) filled more than a page with a portrait of "our Lord", as portrayed by a Swedish actor, in "the supreme moment of human history"; "a scene of moving and courageous dignity". This kind of thing always pays just before Easter.

★

And the BBC always seems to cater for Easter by putting on the radio Miss Dorothy Sayers's *Man Born to be King*, which not merely uses modern idioms in its dialogue, but shows that it really was the Jews who were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. The Reith tradition still lingers on at Broadcasting House, in spite of David Frost and Co.

★

We cannot understand how any parson can possibly refuse to baptise babies, in the name of Jesus, who was himself baptised albeit as an adult. What was good for "our blessed Lord", is surely good enough for Christian babies. However, here we have two priests (*Observer*, February 21st) who have "given up their position in the Church of England because they no longer feel able to baptise babies". They do not think it right to baptise every baby, and doubt whether it is right to baptise any at all. Well, the heavens haven't fallen apart yet at their momentous decision, and the babies would not be a whit worse if they were not baptised.

★

A poor, dear poltergeist in Godalming, Surrey, can't stand electric lights, the *London Evening Standard* (February 2nd) informs us, and it has been switching them off at the King's Arms Hotel there, as well as rudely awakening some of the guests. It had also worried the previous landlord. The present landlord and his wife, thank God, are not unduly worried at the mischievous spirit, but what harm is there in a dose of holy expulsion prayers from a priest waving a crucifix about? If done in the full glare of electric lights, it might prove extraordinarily effective.

★

"A new kind of magazine for the new kind of woman". That is how *Nova* describes itself. It's well produced, to be sure, and written for a slightly higher IQ readership than most women's magazines, but that's not saying much. The first issue (March, 3s.) devoted a page to Sir Julian Huxley's exposition of his Humanist faith which, if not exactly stimulating—nor calculated to please the late

Victor Purcell, or ourselves for that matter—at least spared us the good Teilhard. On another page (to balance?), Monica Furlong purported to explain "the great Christian debate" on "What is the New Morality?", which she saw as "a salutary attempt" to get the "troublesome bee" of sex out of the Christian bonnet, "so that the Church can begin, once more, to look at love as a whole, without getting so agitated by one aspect of it". But has the Christian Church ever looked at love "as a whole"? It's no use presenting Jesus as having a wholesome view of love, especially when you admit (as Miss Furlong did) that he rarely touched on sexual morality. The "example" of Christ was essentially ascetic, and the cause of untold suffering, quite apart from his campaign of hate which Miss Furlong naturally never mentioned.

★

Eve Perrick, *Nova's* "sampler", we are told, consulted "six practitioners of the occult arts"—Daisy Carter (clairvoyant), Katina (astrologer), Tatania de Cortez (palmist), William King (psychometrist), M. F. Hahn-Lecoq (psychographologist) and Frances Hedderly (phrenologist). Miss Perrick described herself as an agnostic and a sceptic, but with "a part of my mind open to conviction by proof". It is not clear whether she was convinced, though she informed us that "the six authors in search of a character came up with, more or less, the same pronouncements and predictions". As the occultists didn't know she was a journalist, we assume that Miss Perrick took no shorthand notes. Yet she seemed to have remembered the conversations remarkably well. We found little evidence, however, of her boasted scepticism.

MAIMONIDES: A JEWISH HERETIC

(Continued from page 91)

presuppositions were contrary to theirs.

The theological outlook of the Jewish opponents was not due simply to the influence of their Christian environment, nor was the action of the Christian authorities to determine the contents of the Jewish faith a novel thing in the thirteenth century. Both parties were heirs to a common and much older Christian tradition.

As early as the sixth century, the Emperor Justinian had taken legislative measures to ensure that the literal meaning of the Bible should be inculcated among the Jews. He had also imposed on the Jews, under penalty of death, adherence to the belief in resurrection, in reward and punishment after death and in the real existence of angels. The religious tradition of the Jews living for centuries in countries under Christian rule developed on lines prescribed by Christian theological legislation.

Maimonides was heir to another trend in Jewish tradition which developed in countries where no legislation regulated the contents of the Jewish faith. He himself justifiably felt free to unite science and philosophy with spiritual monotheism in a system which, in its essential aspects, is modern not medieval. It was inevitable, therefore, that when the two trends of Jewish tradition confronted each other in Christian countries, a violent clash between them should have occurred. The conflict concerning the Maimonides "heresies" was essentially a conflict not between Jewish religion and philosophy, but between a medieval and modern conception of religion and philosophy.

MORALS WITHOUT RELIGION

and other essays

By MARGARET KNIGHT

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, March 21st, 6.45 p.m.: F. J. CORINA. Subject to be announced.

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, March 21st, 6.30 p.m.: C. SHUTTLEWOOD, "Man in Space".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, March 21st, 7.30 p.m.: J. W. BARKER, "Whither Freethought?"

Richmond and Twickenham Humanist Group (Room 5, Community Centre, Sheen Road), Thursday, March 18th, 8 p.m.: A meeting.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, March 21st, 11 a.m.: RICHARD CLEMENTS, "The New Ethic".

Tuesday, March 23rd, 7.30 p.m.: PHILLIP WILSON, "The Future of British Railways".

Surbiton and Malden & Coombe and Kingston Branches NSS (The White Hart, Kingston Bridge, Hampton Wick), Friday, March 19th, 8 p.m.: A meeting.

Notes and News

HIS many friends in the Freethought Movement will be sorry to hear that F. A. Hornibrook is ill in hospital. Mr. Hornibrook who was 88 last month is President of Marble Arch Branch of the National Secular Society, and a member of the Society's Executive Committee. Letters may be sent to him at Chalfont and Gerrard's Cross Hospital, Gerrard's Cross, Bucks.

★

THE Canadian Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which opened its formal public hearings in Ottawa on March 2nd, has, said the *Montreal Star*, been swamped with recommendations. The United Church of Canada, the largest Protestant denomination, advocated a distinct and public system of French-language primary and secondary schools wherever French Canadians are concentrated in sufficient numbers. And spokesmen for the Roman Catholic St. Jean Baptiste Society said "it would

drop its emphasis on Catholic separate schools if this made it easier to obtain French schools". Religious instruction could be given on an unofficial basis before or after regular school hours.

★

WHAT! More about Roman Catholics and birth control? Yes, and with no apologies. This, as we see it (and here we differ from our colleague F. A. Ridley) is the most urgent problem facing the Church today, and the one that will most affect the happiness of men and women—the Freethinker's ultimate touchstone. Despite the Pope's request for silence on the subject, more and more Catholics are opposing their Church's line on contraception. Priests, laymen and above all the women (whom it most concerns) are raising their voices in revolt. And we believe with the *New Statesman* (5/3/65) that their case deserves the maximum publicity; that "editors, those in charge of TV and radio programmes, as well as MPs, have a positive duty . . . to ensure that the issue is kept under constant scrutiny."

★

OF course it is regrettable that Dr. Anne Biezanek, for instance, should not carry her defiance of Rome to its logical conclusion and leave the Church; that—as one reviewer of *All Things New* remarked—she "lost her health, her job, her home, at times almost her sanity, but never her faith". Accepting, however, that Catholicism fills some emotional need for her, we can admire and praise her courage. After eleven pregnancies and seven children in 13 years, she began to use contraceptives herself and opened a clinic to help others in the same need.

★

MAGDALEN GOFFIN, the reviewer in question (and a contributor to the outspoken *Objections to Roman Catholicism*) wrote also (in the *Guardian*, 3/3/65) about *The Experience of Marriage* by Michael Novak (Darton, Longman and Todd, 25s.; 12s. 6d. paper). In order to free themselves from the intolerable burden of constant child-bearing, yet remain true to their faith, Catholics resort to what Mrs. Goffin rightly described as "degrading" practices, "frequently destructive of married happiness" The book tells of "separate bedrooms, intercourse only at the time of menstruation, anxious examination of vaginal secretions, nervous breakdowns; of those who welcome miscarriages, feel guilty when they kiss, and rigorously suppress signs of mutual affection lest they fall into grave sin." Freethinkers have continually drawn attention to such consequences of Catholic teaching; now at last the Catholics themselves are rebelling.

★

Another Roman Catholic writer in the *Guardian*, TV-reviewer Mary Crozier, has never liked *Not So Much A Programme . . .*, which is, perhaps, not so very surprising. How she felt about the notorious sketch, we don't know, but she didn't like David Frost "obsequiously" thanking those who had written to him about it. She wouldn't. Nor would she approve the recent (5/3/65) cover of *Private Eye*, with its "Contraception: Heenan Speaks", showing a picture of the Cardinal declaring, "And if anyone else says a word about it we shall probably burn him". Hardly "obsequious" though, Mrs. Crozier, you'll agree!

★

DR. J. L. TEICHER, who writes about Maimonides, "the Jewish Aristotle" on page 91, is Lecturer in Rabbinics at Cambridge. Dr. Teicher's article, the third in a series on "Great Controversies in Judaism", first appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle* on February 19th, and is reprinted by kind permission of the Editor of that paper.

The Space Age and the Argument from Design

By F. A. RIDLEY

ABOUT the year 50 BC, the famous Roman orator and man-of-letters, Marcus Tullius Cicero, composed a treatise entitled: *De Natura Deorum* ("On the Nature of the Gods"). In this treatise Cicero no doubt repeated the arguments of the religious apologists of his day, for his voluminous works, whilst replete with eloquence, show little trace of any really original thought. Accordingly, in his pamphlet designed to refute freethinking critics of the day—mostly Epicureans like the contemporary poet Lucretius—Cicero gives a leading place to what later came to be known as the argument from design. The gods have fashioned everything with a marvellous precision which could not possibly be the effect of chance. For we have legs made to run, eyes made expressly to see, and mouths to take food. And, with the sun invariably rising in the east and as invariably sinking in the west, and the glorious moon and stars to illuminate the darkness of the night, and so on, Cicero concluded that all such phenomena far transcend the province of mere chance. They were the effect of a divine hand, or rather of several divine hands, since Pagan theology allowed for several deities who collectively were responsible for the visible universe.

About a century after Cicero's day, a new religion; unknown in Cicero's time—Christianity—arrived in Rome. One of the earliest Christian pamphlets to be issued under the auspices of the new creed, the Pauline Epistle to the Romans (probably written about the end of the 1st century), took up Cicero's arguments and endorsed them in a monotheistic Christian setting. The proofs of God's existence and power, as written all around us in the celestial firmament, are so overwhelming that the sceptic is without excuse unless he immediately recognises God's "everlasting power and divinity".

As the new creed evolved its theology, the Catholic Church evolved a vast synthesis of theology and philosophy collectively designated as "apologetics" or natural theology, in which it professed to prove and to establish by human reason, the infinite power of God the Creator. In this imposing pyramid of metaphysical logic, the argument from design came to occupy a leading position: the sun, the moon, the stars shining serenely in the illimitable firmament no less than the earth itself so obviously designed for human habitation and enjoyment! All these diverse phenomena spoke of the existence and power of a supernatural being, of God the Creator, whose unseen, but effectively potent action was reflected in his manifold creation, just as the sunlight is taken up and reflected back on the placid surface and still waters of a lake. Preachers and religious apologists waxed perpetually eloquent on this glorious and ever-renewed theme.

However, in retrospect all this recurring pulpit eloquence on the theme of design when viewed in the cold, dry light of empirical science, merely illustrates the old proverb, "distance lends enchantment". For, prior to the advent of the telescope in 1609 nothing was really known about the sky. However, when viewed through the telescope, the planets became less and less romantic and—as and when applied to them—the argument from design became less and less impressive. Today, the solar system, far from being designed for life, represents a mere accidental collection of solid islands in the sky most of which are incapable of producing any life. Nor is there any reason to believe that the solar system is in any way significant in the universe at large.

For the solar planets from Mercury (with the temperature of boiling lead) to Pluto (so cold as to be indescribable), all appear to be entirely incapable of supporting any "life" whatsoever, even the crudest forms of primitive existence. Mars and Venus may be partial exceptions, just capable of supporting the most primitive forms of plant life. But any rational Martians belong exclusively to the realm of science fiction, for the climatic conditions are impossible for any conscious life.

Up to this present generation, the age-long argument for and against design, has been conducted by abstract argument. For even the telescopic age can only observe at a distance of usually many millions of miles and then make its deductions from possibly faulty observations.

However, today this immemorial state of things is quite definitely coming to an end. For it now seems certain that, before the end of this century and quite possibly before the end of this decade, cosmonauts will succeed in landing on the moon. Later there may even be landings on Mars and Venus.

The effects of this initial probe will be felt in many diverse fields, including, in my submission, theology. For the strangely-garbed cosmonauts who will first make direct physical contact with other worlds, will willy nilly be able to raise the ancient controversy over design from the merely deductive to the empirical plane. For the very first time, the living products of evolution on our own planet will have the opportunity to observe and to note at first hand, the works of the Lord, and from what we already know they are unlikely to be very impressed. For neither the arid mountains on the moon nor the arid deserts of Mars, appear to confirm the arguments of Cicero and/or Paul.

The hallowed argument from design, already theoretically demolished by the arguments of a succession of rationalist thinkers from Epicurus (against whom Cicero argued) will be finally empirically destroyed by the pioneers of the space age. They will see the works of the Lord scattered throughout space, but unfortunately, will not be able to sing his praises, since he has unaccountably neglected to "design" them with any atmosphere.

Religious Opposition to Birth Control

RELIGIOUS sanctions against imperative public birth control programmes in the United States and abroad appear to be weakening under the steady fire of an aroused public opinion.

Dramatic evidence of the new climate for birth control programmes was the shift of former President Dwight D. Eisenhower from a position of opposition to one of enthusiastic endorsement. While serving as President, Mr. Eisenhower one day tossed off, in reply to a reporter's question, the remark that "as long as I am here" no government funds would be used to support birth control in connection with foreign aid programmes. That stopped it so long as he was in office, and not until President John F. Kennedy came on the scene could even introductory work begin.

Now General Eisenhower has soundly reversed his position and has joined former President Harry S. Truman as co-chairman of the honorary sponsors council of Planned Parenthood-World Population.

What was likely the most sensational dual public rela-

tions punch ever packed by a non-profit organisation in the US had been deftly assembled by an old hand, General William H. Draper Jr., an intimate of both former presidents. General Draper has been a close student of world population problems both in government posts and Planned Parenthood for many years.

Those hopeful of averting population disaster are encouraged by the fact that the US State Department is proceeding to offer research assistance to underdeveloped countries in the matter of population growth. There are reports that the Johnson administration is not averse to providing aid for actual clinical birth control.

Greatest disappointment of 1964 was the fate of birth control at the Vatican Council. New thinking on the subject within the Catholic community had raised hopes that there might be some modification of the traditional ban of that church on what it calls "artificial birth control". These hopes were dashed when Pope Paul VI summarily withdrew the subject from the Council agenda and 2,200 bishops voted approval of his action. Particularly resentful of laymen's interest in the topic, Pope Paul served notice on the Council that he had reserved to himself the right to determine the Roman Catholic position on birth control.

Decisive influence at the Vatican against any change on birth control was wielded by Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani, famed Curia conservative. He said that the right to determine the number of one's offspring was "unheard of in past ages". He pointed out that he himself was the 10th of 12 children of a humble family.

Negative, again, was the news from Egypt where 86 babies are born every hour and the present population of 27 million will be 40 million by 1980. Islam has no basic teaching against birth control as Catholicism has, yet its leaders are said to have been "no help" in getting official programmes under way in the United Arab Republic.

On the positive side, and despite the intransigence at the top, there was an evident ferment within Roman Catholic ranks on the birth control issue. At the Vatican Council Paul Emile Cardinal Léger of Montreal and Leo Jozef Cardinal Suenens of Belgium spoke up courageously as to the need for a new positioning of their Church on the issue.

In Massachusetts a law flatly prohibiting dissemination of birth control information and equipment may be heading for a new effort at repeal. This law, the Connecticut counterpart of which was described by the *Washington Post* as "barbarous" and indicative of "contempt for life", was the subject of a referendum in 1948. Personally responsible for its defeat was the Archbishop of Boston, Richard Cardinal Cushing. His directive to Catholics to vote "no" because the referendum was a "moral issue" resulted in a near solid Catholic opposition vote. The final tally was 1,085,350 against repeal to 806,829 for repeal.

Now Cardinal Cushing has had a change of heart. He will not again seek to defeat repeal of the statute. "In no way will I feel it my duty to oppose amendments to the law," he said.

A Catholic physician, Dr. Joseph L. Dorsey, advocated repeal of the law in an article published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Msgr. Francis J. Lally, editor of the often reactionary *Boston Pilot*, agreed that the time had come for "reconsidering the question in the light of a plural society".

There was a good chance that the Supreme Court might give a stimulus to a Massachusetts referendum by finding a comparable Connecticut law unconstitutional. A suit seeking to achieve this was before the court with a decision expected any day.

[Reprinted from *Church and State*, USA, January 1965.]

The Odious, The Beautiful and The Useful

A RECENT number of this journal (March 5th) had a stimulating and forthright article by F. H. Snow which was titled "The Veneration of the Odious" which, in any other paper, would surely lead him into trouble. He is concerned mainly with buildings, and, let us face it, with church buildings and is for sweeping away the ugly, whether old or new, from cathedrals to gravestones. There is real difficulty here however, much as we may warm to his thesis. Who is to decide what is ugly? Past periods vary enormously in style, in mass, and in detail, but until the industrial revolution very little was made that was totally displeasing to the eye and time has added its usual contribution in enrichment of colour and texture bringing all into harmony with the English scene. Efforts at preservation, merely because a building is Norman, unless it embodies some unique feature, are another thing altogether, and Mr. Snow is right in implying that the odour of sanctity which usually mingles with the odour of dry-rot is largely to blame for all this waste of time and money. It must be stressed that the old is not necessarily beautiful. The paltry use after all the fund-raising, often for a handful of people, is just another item in the scale against blind preservation.

What is the present position? The mind's eye at once jumps to a known area. Let us say East Anglia, admittedly one of the best in the country. There is Ely Cathedral, King's College Chapel, Cambridge, Lavenham, Blytheburgh and a hundred more, perhaps less well-known but fitting serenely into the landscape. Odious, or downright ugly? How many of these qualify for this label until we reach Victorian times? Even the 17th and 18th century gravestones which so greatly trouble Mr. Snow are often aesthetically rewarding, however sombre the subject. Except where they mark the distinguished dead they might well be put round the edges in some cases, leaving the space as an open garden. For devastating ugliness and aesthetic horror in this particular we have to come forward to the cemetery of yesterday and today.

No. It is all too difficult. In sharing with the author his distaste for all the mumbo-jumbo and drivel that these places perpetuate, my mind is more troubled with the under-use of these spaces—perhaps misuse is the more correct word given our present knowledge—and am more driven to think of preservation of those which may be called works of art, some better some worse as in any gallery—and to considering to what socially useful purpose they may be put. The recent essay competition at Cambridge on the subject "What shall we do with the College chapels?" judged by no less a person than E. M. Forster, may give us some clues as to what can be done with the village churches. The need for such space is even greater than at the University, for there is often no other meeting place. After simple internal reconstruction these could often offer room for library and reading rooms, music at all levels, lectures, debates, occasional films, committees of all sorts, and so on, all under the direction of a curator/counsellor, the one condition being that the structure be kept with the utmost care as a work of art. Just as

NOW IN PAPERBACK

ALL THINGS NEW

DR. ANNE BIEZANEK

The controversial book by the young woman Roman Catholic doctor—mother of seven children—who here explains why she defied the Church she loves in order to practise and teach scientific birth control.

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individual historic rooms are often shown complete in a museum, these would be maintained externally in relation to their environment and for much the same purpose. Nobody is going to suggest that where an existing building is in full use and obviously needed for church purposes in the locality any change is necessary; but how often is this so? Consider the case at Crittendon, Wiltshire referred to in *This Believing World* (THE FREETHINKER, February 26th, 1965). Here the attendance has dropped from near one hundred to three—a mother and two daughters. How long does this farce go on? Woolwich Parish Church and its herculean efforts to secure just nothing is also fresh in our minds. This is clearly the trend, and who will suggest that it is not high time to consider what activities might usefully come next? Or is it more correct and sensible in this overcrowded and vigorous island that the buildings should be left empty?

My own strong feeling is that when usage falls below a certain percentage of seating accommodation, say 20 per cent, the change may be considered due or overdue; the valuable space should be made available to people more anxious to use it and whose ancestors probably built, embellished and sustained the place during earlier but quite different times.

JESSE COLLINS

CORRESPONDENCE

OBJECTIONS TO ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Margaret McLroy has a rather optimistic view of the future evolution of Roman Catholicism. However, it is doubtful whether she is right in thinking that the reactionaries will not win in the end. And it is not sure at all that those who see the reform movement in the Church as merely a cynical attempt to make concessions in order to hang on to power, are wrong. Here in Holland, we are confronted with an example of modern democratic Catholic thinking.

Competent Catholic circles have observed that the Catholic population has become aware of the inferiority of Catholic schools and feels inclined to turn her back on them.

To remedy this state of affairs our Catholic "reformers" make an ingenious proposal. Catholic and municipal school pupils (generally children of non-believing parents) ought to be united in one national school. However, Catholic schools are to be maintained wherever there is still a reason for their existence. In this way, it is said, Catholicism will be present in a non-Catholic environment and influence it. Nothing is said about Protestant school pupils. They evidently are not yet ripe to be absorbed by Catholicism.

Modern Catholicism seems to be much like the old Catholicism and to pursue the unchanged aims by new means.

A. M. VAN DER GIEZEN (Middelburg—Holland)

GLORIOUS NONSENSE

On entering St. Paul's Cathedral even the most sceptical cannot help but be impressed by the size and grandeur of the place—made for the glory of God, Christ and his apostle—Paul. Though today one feels that St. Paul's is thought of more as an allure for American tourists than for any religious reason.

The worshippers of Christ have certainly exploited man's admiration of splendour and beauty for their own ends—to perpetuate a myth and defend wealth and privilege. The Christians assuredly know the tricks that the modern admen use to such

vulgar effect. In practically every settlement of any size in the West the buildings of the church rose to dominate the landscape, inescapable to every eye. Above the people of Europe towered a spire or steeple serving as a grim reminder that if they did not fill the collecting boxes or kow-tow to the priests then they would be doomed to a sizzling hell. This was a sort of medieval equivalent of the fatal consequences of not using Amplex.

The erection of vast citadels of worship is also practised by the otherwise rational Communists in idolatry of Marx and Lenin. Few intelligent people would deny the ability of Marx or Lenin—their memorial is the changes brought about in the world by their writings and work. Mozart needs no edifice to convince people of his greatness, he does it with his music. If Christ and Christianity are so wonderful, why do they need the prop of extravagant architecture? Churches and cathedrals were often built by men whose own housing conditions were appalling. It is a crime that money should go to building cathedrals when there are thousands of homeless people in this country. In a world in which there is widespread misery and malnutrition it is wrong to restore dilapidated churches. Especially when the numbers of the faithful diminish every year and the buildings are only used for a few hours of mumbo-jumbo a week.

Perhaps the recent hero-worshipping of President Kennedy and Sir Winston Churchill is more understandable. Yet the adulation went beyond all rational bounds. Sir Winston Churchill was certainly a remarkable man, but the recent state orgy at St. Paul's Cathedral in his memory showed that it was a myth rather than a man that was being remembered. And the same can be said of Christ.

BILL HUGHES

APPEAL

A wave of terror has started in Catalonia and other Spanish provinces following many demonstrations which have taken place demanding freedom of association and free trade unions. Money is urgently needed to help many families who have already been badly hit by the Franco police, and the Workers Trade Union Alliance (ASO) of Spain urgently calls on all democratic people to help the victims and the struggle against the regime.

An appeal for help from inside Spain has reached us. The anxious call came at a moment when workers and students have been demonstrating for better conditions and free trade unions.

Many workers have been arrested during the past weeks in Catalonia and Madrid, and there is a possibility that many more will be detained in the days to come. Here are the names of some of those arrested: José L. Martínez, Juan Navarro Escón, Luis Roscoso, Lorenzo Funés, Juan Estrada, Manuel Linares, José Cascubiela, José Antonio Mateu, Vicente Lizcano, Angel Garcia, Angel Alcazar, Luis Alvarez, Elias Martin, Pedro Rica, Juan Polch Garcia, Juan José Avila, Angel Rosas.

The appeal came from the Workers Trade Union Alliance (ASO) whose members are young and old militants of the CNT, UGT and other organisations of Spain. We feel certain that you will be most anxious to aid the oppressed Spanish people at this critical moment in their history.

Please be generous by sending your donation to the Treasurer, J. Cabanas, 42 Dalgarno Gardens, London, W.10.

A. ROA, Secretary.

National Confederation of Labour of Spain in Exile

WANTED

A ground floor flat is urgently required by two elderly Free-thinkers who are being forced to leave their present home. If possible it should be in London or the Home Counties, but anything will be considered.

Readers who can help are requested to contact the Secretary, National Secular Society, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

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The Freethinker

Volume LXXXV—No. 13

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MANY years ago when I was a theological student (and as such, a prospective Dr. Robinson!) I remember a well-known Oxford Anglo-Catholic theologian addressing us on the awe-inspiring subject of God the Creator, God the Father, the almighty Creator of all, and Himself created by none. When compared with this omniscient and ubiquitous Being, everything and everyone shrank into complete insignificance, said the divine, an insignificance that extended even to the most exalted personages of the celestial hierarchy. Mary and Michael the archangel are far more exalted than anyone whom you can imagine, but Mary and Michael are nothing when compared with God the Father, he concluded impressively.

Almighty God

Such was the traditional theology of the Christian Church only half a century ago before the scientific revolution had caused those lusty "winds of change" that today, are blowing so vigorously that even the cloisters are shaken.

In this era when (as Cardinal Heenan recently admitted in a pastoral letter) "every man is his own theologian and startling opinions are frequently expressed"—no doubt an oblique allusion to his episcopal colleague, Archbishop Roberts—how stands the traditional theology of the Christian Churches, as expressed in the formula of the so-called Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and earth"? For it seems clear that the God-formula is decidedly shaky in an epoch of apparently complete theological confusion, when Anglican bishops deny that God is a person at all and when the most famous Catholic philosopher of the century, Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, puts forward views of future human integration that appear to rule out completely the immortality of the individual human soul.

It would, I imagine, be far from an easy matter to find a theologian today (even in Oxford, that traditional home of lost causes) who would repeat with equal confidence the simple belief in God's omnipotence so naively taken for granted by his aforementioned predecessor half a century ago.

God the Creator

The traditional theology of the Christian Churches, was authoritatively stated during the 4th and 5th centuries. St. Augustine of Hippo (355-430) was probably its most important individual architect, and the Athanasian Creed—its most elaborately pseudo-scientific formula—seems to have been the work of one of his followers.

In which connection it must be noted, that if our own age can be accurately denominated as the age of the scientific revolution (in which, we have recently been informed, 90 per cent of all the scientists who have ever lived and worked in this world, are still alive and at work today) the era (roughly equivalent to the 4th and 5th centuries) in which Christian theology found its definitive formulation, was perhaps the least scientific since mankind

emerged from barbarism. For during this long drawn-out era of the decline and fall both of the Roman Empire and of the classical civilisation of antiquity, the remarkable scientific renaissance inaugurated by the Ancient Greeks was falling into complete oblivion. No one *knew* anything about the actual heavens and earth, that God was supposed to have created, nor did the theologians care. Did not St. Ambrose of Milan, a doctor of the Universal Church and the master of St. Augustine himself, go on record with the notable declarations that: "The motions of the sun and moon are of no concern for our salvation", and "It is not by logical reason that God has planned our salvation"?

Actually, the nearest approach to a scientific thinker in the early Christian Church was St. Augustine, who anticipated Einstein in his definition of time, and asked the notable question (surely an awkward one for a theologian) "What was God doing before he made the universe?"

It is, I would suggest, precisely because modern science has revealed to us the *real* nature of "the heavens and earth" which God was supposed to have created, that theism is discarded. A universe in which life is only an isolated "accident" is not at all the sort of universe that any being of presumably normal intelligence and/or morality let alone an almighty and morally perfect being could conceivably have created. Schopenhauer once declared that only a criminal lunatic could have made the universe of human knowledge and experience!

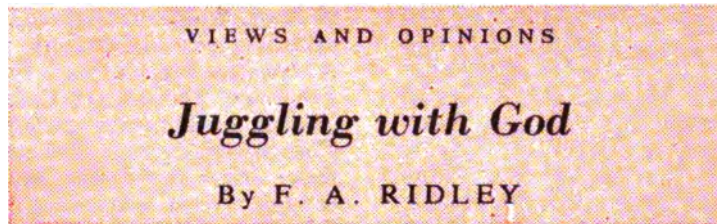
The Dilemma of Theism

The scientific revolution is the first and sufficient cause of the present theological chaos that has nowadays spilled over from its professional confines into the indignity of the popular press. As the more intelligent Christian intellectuals of our day (such as Teilhard de Chardin, Bishop Robinson and his South Bank colleagues, and Archbishop Roberts and his co-abettors) have seen, the old theology is in rags and ruins. Those theological giants of former days, Augustine, Aquinas *et al*, have become ancient monuments.

The fundamental dilemma of theism today could, I suggest, be stated today in these terms: the known phenomena of the universe, including man, are completely incompatible with the traditional concepts of theism. However, since *some* form of theism *ipso facto* constitutes the inseparable foundation of religion, atheism, pure and simple does not represent a possible theological solution. There is, in fact, only one possible line for Christian theology to take in the future: to juggle with God; that is to try to modify the traditional conceptions of theism so as to try to bring it into line with modern science.

Varieties of Theism

This is, of course, precisely what Christian modernists are at present busily engaged in doing, and the Bishop of Woolwich seems to be, if not the most successful at least the most publicised theological juggler. Actually these often ingenious, but really never very



convincing apologists who are trying to square the circle by making theology scientific, have really only got a very limited field for their verbal manoeuvres. They can argue for some kind of a limited God who would like to do better but can't. Theologically the best-known form of this kind of cutting God down to size—and credibility—was the Manichean (Persian) Albigensian theory that there were actually two gods, a good one and an evil one, who mutually cancel each other out. Otherwise, like Bishop Robinson, one boldly denies personality to God, thus

converting him into a kind of life force like that somewhat nebulous one so eloquently—if hardly convincingly preached by Bergson and by George Bernard Shaw in *Back to Methuselah* (though G.B.S. seems to have originally got the idea from Samuel Butler, a far more original thinker than he was himself).

Juggling with God can be ingenious and amusing. But whilst it will, no doubt, share the headlines of the popular press with more mundane curiosities, I do not anticipate any genuine theological renaissance.

A Catholic View of the Baptists

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

I HAVE in front of me a booklet of some 111 pages, *Our Separated Brethren*, by the Rev. David Woodard, published by the Catholic Truth Society, giving a brief history and summary of the chief features of Anglicanism, Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, the Baptists, the Society of Friends, Unitarianism, Methodism, the Salvation Army and several smaller sects. The treatment of each is rounded off by a section entitled "our apologetic". Naturally, in these ecumenical days, the author does not breathe fire and brimstone against the wicked heresies of the sects, and their adherents. On the contrary, it acts as a *vade mecum* for Catholics among the jungle of Protestant discord, with the object of leading strayed sheep back to the "one true fold". He is at pains to stress points of similarity and appeal, while in no way glossing over the basic departures from Catholic practice and belief.

The booklet is prefaced by a very revealing set of statistics, for each of the decades of this century, of Catholic priests, Church of England incumbents, and Non-conformist ministers. Once more they illustrate the growth of the Catholic Church in this country. It will suffice to compare the two columns for 1900 and 1950 (the latest given):—

	1900	1950
Catholic priests, secular and religious ...	2,812	6,610
Church of England incumbents ...	13,894	12,890
Congregational ministers ...	2,890	2,593
Baptist ministers ...	1,992	1,953
Unitarian ministers ...	366	243
Methodist ministers ...	4,221	4,602
Salvationist officers (men and women)—a figure rising steadily to ...		2,500

From this it clearly emerges that whereas at the beginning of the century the ratio of Catholic priests to Anglican clergy was approximately 1 to 5, it is now approximately 1 to 2! Moreover, except for a slight increase among the Methodists, and a steady increase among the Salvationists, the other denominations have not only not maintained their figures but have even lost, though, except for the Unitarians, not remarkably so.

Nearly half the book comprises the author's treatment of Anglicanism. It is therefore not possible within the scope of this article adequately to give an account of it in detail, or, for that matter, of any of the other sections. I want, instead, to make some comment on his remarks upon the Baptists, among whom, the author says "The ancient type of Protestantism will probably still be found". The opportunity will be taken, Fr. Woodard adds to "mention some of those difficulties which keep on recurring and are suggested in the mind of the English inquirer of whatever nominal belief".

These remarks constitute two pages only of his pamphlet, but I think they are extremely important in that they certainly give a very fair picture of the average Englishman's idea of Catholicism. Fr. Woodard's synopsis

is, of course, written to give Catholics some idea of what, to them, from an entrenched and unified view, seems an appalling chaos. But it is not less worthy of a serious analysis by Freethinkers. For, unless we also understand Protestant ignorance of Catholicism, we cannot effectually combat the creeping mushroom growth of the Catholic Church among the Protestants, who suddenly find all these stories are untrue, or inept, or distorted, and thus, for this reason, succumb to the claims of Rome. "Know thine enemy," is a maxim good for both Protestants and Freethinkers.

"Still," writes Fr. Woodard, "the scandalous tales of Maria Monk, Pope Joan and the Renaissance Popes are reiterated." No knowledgeable Freethinker can fail to observe that if this reflects the truth of the case, the Baptists live in a little backwater of their own. The first two bits of "horror fiction" have been effectively exploded long since, and while this cannot be said to be true of the morals and activities of Renaissance popes, it seems a great pity that Protestant attention is thus diverted from the far more significant present-day activities of their successors! I consider, however, Fr. Woodard's next remarks the most important. Things common enough to Catholics he says, "are thought by them [the Baptists] to be obsolete and they have never considered their existence in the post-Tridentine Church: the index, monasteries, and convents, the Jesuits, the College of Cardinals, hierarchical government, seminaries, canonisations, indulgences, and even the Pope himself are regarded as things of a past age only, although they see them mentioned in the secular press from time to time."

Of course, Fr. Woodard does not mean that Baptists think these things do not exist; merely that, like other Protestants, the Baptists suppose them to be only living on into the modern world as anachronisms, and soon likely to pass away altogether. Exactly, and that is just the attitude of mind which Freethinkers too are up against when they seek to draw attention to the dangers of reunion, or strive to enliven their friends to the imperialistic claims of militant Catholicism. A little investigation proves that if the Church of Rome is dead in this country, it certainly does not recognise the fact, but has grown without ceasing over the past 135 years. This booklet is an attempt to show individual Catholics how to extend its influence even further. It costs only 1s. 6d. and has sold 30 thousand copies.

CHURCH LOSSES IN GLASGOW

THE Church of Scotland has—we read in the *Times* (11/3/65)—lost 4,500 members in Glasgow in the past year. This continues a trend over five years during which time the 245 churches in the city have lost totals of between 2,000 and 5,000 a year.

Hugh MacDiarmid

By JOHN L. BROOM

WHEN any mention is made of Scottish poetry, the majority of people tend immediately to think of Robert Burns. Yet, great though Burns was, his work was the culmination of a long line of fine poets in Scotland, and after over a century of stagnation, there emerged in the twenties of this century a literary movement of tremendous energy and power. The Scottish literary renaissance has produced many fine poets, but by far the greatest of these, and, in the opinion of many the greatest Scottish poet who has ever lived, is the subject of this article.

Christopher Murray Grieve was born in the border town of Langholm in Dumfriesshire in 1892. This most ardent of Scottish Nationalists thus escaped being an Englishman by only six miles, but as he himself says, he thereby acquired "the frontier spirit". After service in the RAMC during the Great War he became a reporter on the *Montrose Review*.

His first book a collection of essays *Annals of the Five Senses* appeared in 1923, but it was the appearance of *Sangschaw* (1925) and *Penny Wheep* (1926) which established "Hugh MacDiarmid" (he adopted his famous pseudonym in 1922) as a force to be reckoned with in the history of modern Scottish literature. These collections embody some of the finest lyrics in Scots ever written, for example "The Watrigaw", "The Bonnie Bronkit Bairn", "Country Life", "The Eemis Stane" and "Crowdieknowe". Some critics have claimed that because these early poems are in dialect, they have only a restricted appeal. But this is nonsense. Little effort is required by the average reader to master the unfamiliar words, and once this has been achieved, it is seen that the sentiments could have been expressed in no other language but Scottish. Take, for example, the exquisite and profound "Watrigaw" which could never successfully be translated into English.

Ac weat forenicht i' the yow-trummle,¹
I saw yon antrim² thing,
A watrigaw³ wi' its chitterin⁴ licht
Ayont the on-ding⁵;
An' I thoct o' the last wild look ye gied
Afore ye deed!
There was nae reek i' the laverock's hoose⁶
That nicht—an nane i' mine;
But I hae thoct o' that foolish licht
Ever sin syne;
An' I think that mebbe at last I ken
What your look meant then.

The prolonged and often bitter controversy over the use of Scots by Scottish poets is largely beside the point. Poets should employ whatever language they feel best conveys their thoughts or emotions, and MacDiarmid himself turned to English in his later "world-view" poems.

In 1926, MacDiarmid published "A Drunk Man looks at the Thistle" which many critics regard as his masterpiece. This great poem is a series of reflections on Scotland (the thistle) and mankind in general by an observer whose vision has been clarified rather than clouded by alcohol. In it we see MacDiarmid's passionate belief in the duty of every individual to follow his own light wherever it may lead him with utter disregard of popular conventions or beliefs. You all must show, he cries:—

Contempt o' ilka⁷ goal
Ilka goal save ane alane
To be yoursel' whatever that may be . . .

And the drunk man proudly proclaims his credo:

I'll hae nae hauf-way hoose but aye⁸ be whaur
Extremes meet—it's the only way I ken⁹
To dodge the curst conceit o' bein' rich
That damns the vast majority o' men.

MacDiarmid's goal is nothing less than the liberation of humanity from all soul-destroying agencies including man's own stultifying beliefs and prejudices. The poet's Utopia (as expressed in *Annals of the Five Senses*) is a place:

Where the members of each group of workers should find in their work the development of their characters and the consecration of their powers, where each citizen would know and be strengthened by the knowledge that he laboured not for himself only, not for his family, not for his country, but for eternal good. So long as there is fear between man and man, so long as there are looks askance, there can be no communion. The new city must be a city of friends and lovers.

Many criticisms have been levelled against MacDiarmid's successive and apparently often perverse political allegiances. At present he is a member of the Communist Party, which he paradoxically but characteristically rejoined *after* the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 (he was expelled before the war for "nationalist deviation") because as he said "in times of trouble one must cleave to one's friends". He told the present writer recently that he is moving now towards anarchism, but however that may be, it must be realised that all the political ideologies to which he has at various times given his support, are for MacDiarmid only means to the creation of his perfect society of free men. Nevertheless he believes that these ideologies must be socialistic in one form or another, and although he despises material success and prosperity, he realises that men cannot begin to fulfil their potentialities until they enjoy the basic necessities. This is from his "Second Hymn to Lenin":

Oh, its nonsense nonsense nonsense,
Nonsense at this time o' day
That breid and butter problems
S'ud be in ony man's way.
They s'ud be like the tails we tint¹⁰
On leavin' the monkey stage
A' maist folk fash¹¹ about's alike
Primaeval to oor age
We've grown up folk that haena yet
Put bairnly things aside
—A' that's material an' moral—
An' oor new state descried.

Nevertheless MacDiarmid is the highbrow par excellence and teaches that there must be no pandering or talking down to the masses. He has nothing but contempt mingled with pity for the "ordinary working man" gazing mindlessly at the telly, filling in his football coupon or discussing the probable winner of the 3.30. He wants:

Nae simple rhymes for silly folk
But the hail art as Lenin gied.

And he inveighs again and again against the debasement of the people by a corrupt press, educational system and church:

I cannot content myself with this miserable blind life that the majority of mankind is at present leading, and I do not see any reason for it. Moreover I do not see anything really worth doing but to show men the way to a better life. If our philosophy our science and our art do not contribute to that, what are they worth?

Lucky Poet (his autobiography)

The right to ignorance, the avoidance of the excruciatingly painful business of thinking, cannot be conceded by anyone concerned with the interests of the masses of mankind . . . The cultural issue is the crucial and all important one and is the end in the light of which everything else must be regarded simply as means

—"Joyce is Hard, but so is Life" article in the *Daily Worker*.

(Concluded on page 103)

1 "ewe-tremble"—the cold spell after the shearing; 2 rare, unusual; 3 indistinct rainbow; 4 shivering; 5 downpour; 6 "There was no smoke in the lark's house" i.e. it was a dark and stormy night; 7 every; 8 always; 9 know; 10 lost; 11 worry.

This Believing World

IN SPITE of the expressed wish of the Pope for silence on birth control, supported by the pathetic plea from Cardinal Heenan, the ITV programme *This Week* gave us a very good documentary on the problem on March 11th, with Catholic women bravely defying both the Pope and Cardinal Heenan. The women made it plain that, while they wanted children, there was a limit—and that limit can only be attained these days with the use of artificial contraceptives.

★

A PRIEST did his best to defend the Church's ban on contraceptive devices, but could say little more than that "it was against God's law". Needless to say he produced no argument whatever that it was God's law. How did he know? His was a painful exhibition of "babbling" nonsense. Here were a number of women with many children who would endanger their own health and lives by having more, being told by a celibate priest that it was "God's law" that they should not prevent conception. God, it seems, doesn't care two hoots about the poor mother.

★

"SHOULD THE BBC ever make fun of religion?" is the profound question posed by the *Sunday Express* (7/3/65), and not answered by the paper. Instead, we were given answers by members of the public, most of whom were very religious, and therefore horrified that anything so sacred as religion should be attacked. A point to note is that "religion" always means the Christian religion. You can be as hilarious as you like over witch-doctors, but you must never never laugh at the "fishes' heads" archbishops are obliged to wear when conducting divine service. But it is interesting to note that while lay people protest, one clergyman was plucky enough to say, "I think bad religion should be a target for satirical exposure". He was the Rev. S. H. Taylor, and he added that "in Proverbs even God laughs at the silly contradictions of mankind".

★

BUT WHAT a pity that Mr. Taylor did not more clearly define what he meant by "bad" religion. Some of us think that this description fits Christianity in general and not just the more fundamentalist sects. Indeed, even the tremendous opportunities given Christianity by the radio and TV do not seem to have prevented it from being both bad and silly.

★

WE HAVE often wondered whether in fact TV was such a positive advantage to religion. One answer comes from the Rev. G. Neely of the Church of the Epiphany Rotherhithe, who declares in the London *Evening Standard* (15/2/65) that at least some of his parishioners "preferred Ena Sharples", the heroine of Coronation Street, to him. Ena, it is true, does look after a mission, but the only song we heard her play on the organ—and she plays very well—was "I'll be your sweetheart".

★

AS EVERYBODY knows—or was told—the ship's band, when the *Titanic* was sinking, played "Nearer my God to thee", and it was sung both courageously and reverently. Later however, this story was debunked. And certainly many survivors were glad to be saved from getting any nearer to God. But the famous hymn is again in the news now that a new Anglican hymn book is shortly to be published—without it! It "encourages an altogether too maunderingly dependent attitude", said the literary adviser, Mr. Pollard.

Two Letters to the New Statesman

DR. ANNE BIEZANEK proposes (according to a letter in the *New Statesman*, 12/3/65), "to establish a haven, in the Merseyside area, for 'Priests under Pressure', such as Fathers McMahon and Cocker—a place free from ecclesiastical pressure of any kind where priests can reflect peacefully and come to a completely free decision on their own future, and, should they decide to return to the secular state, where first steps towards rehabilitation can be taken". The letter was in the name of John-Francis Phipps of 67 Bathgate Road, London, S.W.19.

The following letter by the American columnist John Crosby, appeared in the same issue of the *New Statesman*:—

I'm disturbed by the uproar over the BBC sketch about a Roman Catholic priest and birth control. Sketches on the BBC don't usually get demands for an apology in the House of Commons. The Catholic Church demands a special position. This is a form of Catholic terrorism that has paralysed, the United States. I'm saddened to see Britain yield to it. The Catholic technique is simply to kick up such a storm that next time the writers, the editors, will be too terrified to comment or criticise anything Catholic. This works very well in America. The Catholics criticise our books, our plays, our movies, our birth control. Catholic books, plays or actions may not be criticised or commented about at all. I speak, incidentally, from very recent experience. A column I wrote discussing, very mildly, the effects of Catholicism in Ireland was suppressed. I can and do denounce advertisers who pay my paper's bills. Catholics, no.

Extremely important social and scientific advances are held up by throttling discussion. In America, Catholic pressure has totally suppressed discussion of the Aid to Education Bill, the most important piece of social legislation since the abolition of slavery. I'm not objecting, you understand, to the fact that Catholic opposition has stopped passage of the bill. Lots of bills, including very good ones, have got stopped. What Catholics have done is stopped discussion of the bill except on their terms. The Catholic position is fully printed in all newspapers. The Catholic position is that a Catholic supports a state school system he doesn't send his children to. Why shouldn't he get tax money for his Catholic parochial school system? Sounds reasonable. But the main reason he doesn't get tax money to support his religious schools is that it's unconstitutional. Only President Kennedy, a Catholic, had enough guts to say it and because he was President it got printed in the press. It hasn't, so far as I can see, been printed since.

The Protestant argument never gets printed. Their argument, a cogent one, is that they support the state schools too, and also a public school system, and a magnificent one. Yale and Harvard, to mention only two universities, and Exeter and Andover, probably the two finest preparatory schools in America (a preparatory school is what we would call Eton) were all originally religious schools, started and run by clergymen and supported by Protestants. They are all enormously rich because of Protestant generosity. They are also marvellous schools. The Catholic parochial schools in America (as any liberal Catholic will tell you) are not only flat broke but they are the worst schools we have, far worse than our state schools (and some of those are pretty bad). President Kennedy, our only Catholic President, went to a series of Protestant schools. Most rich Catholics go to good Protestant schools and universities.

I think that priests are so ill-equipped as teachers that they should be prevented by law from teaching children simply as a matter of public policy. I think also that priests should be prevented by law from preaching birth control. Birth control is a public health matter, and, again, priests are not competent to deal with it. When you come right down to it, that's what that disputed sketch was about. The function of satire is to cleanse. But suppression has always been the technique of the Catholics. What the Catholics object to is opinion. They have been legally restrained from torture which they practised so skilfully in the Inquisition. Now they are practising a sort of editorial Inquisition. Criticise us, make fun of us, discuss us in any but our terms and we will torture you editorially; we will see to it that you are sacked from your jobs; we will see to it that it is not printed or, if it is, it is denounced in the House of Commons.

JOHN CROSBY

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Bristol Humanist Group (Kelmescott, 4 Portland Street, Clifton), Sunday, March 28th, 7.30 p.m.: E. HAILSTONE and others, "Abortion".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, March 28th, 6.30 p.m.: A. J. STATHAM, "Rights and Reason—The Contribution of Thomas Paine".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, March 28th, 7.30 p.m.: PETER TYRELL, "Blessing, Bashing and Beads".

North Staffordshire Humanist Group (Cartwright House, Broad Street, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent), Friday, March 26th, 7 p.m.: A meeting.

Portsmouth Humanist Society (Friends' Meeting House, 25 Northwood Road, Hilsea), Friday, March 26th, 7.30 p.m.: REV. D. STIRMAN, "Is Humanism Outmoded?".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, March 28th, 11 a.m.: DR. JOHN LEWIS, "Freedom in the Welfare State".

Tuesday, March 30th, 7.30 p.m.: LESLIE ALDOUS, "The United Nations".

Surbiton and Malden & Coombe and Kingston Branches NSS (The White Hart, Kingston Bridge, Hampton Wick), Friday, March 26th, 8 p.m.: A meeting.

Worthing Humanist Group (Morelands Hotel, Marine Parade), Sunday, March 28th, 5.30 p.m.: HECTOR HAWTON, "What Humanism Can Offer".

Notes and News

ALTHOUGH the avant-garde of the clergy were often criticised for undermining the simple faith of simple people, said Canon John Collins in St. Paul's Cathedral on March 14th, there were many cases where to undermine a simple faith that was untenable would do much more good than to leave it standing. Theological colleges were "hot-houses" for the care of the professional ministry. They concentrated, the Canon said, on the ordination examination, giving little time for other interests (*The Guardian*, 15/3/65). They did not train men for the modern world. "They do not train them to be questioning men, questioning everything, including their own theology." Throughout the Church of England there was a great lack of intellectual integrity.

THE BBC was accused of "a panic flight from decent values", "coarse taste" and "vulgarity" in a *Times* leader on March 6th, this presumably being the view of the Editor, ex-BBC Director-General Sir William Haley. The tone of the present Director-General, Sir Hugh Carleton Greene (in an interview in the *Sunday Times* the following day) was contrastingly intelligent and responsible. "There may be those of us who would have preferred the BBC not to have apologised at all to outraged Catholics", commented *New Statesman* critic John Holmstrom (12/3/65), but "Greene's wording was sober and reserved the right of free speech. It's clear from his interview that he's not rattled and won't let the BBC creep back into the Auntism which he's done so much to drag it clear of . . . With a man like Greene, we needn't worry about refreezing into the prim old image."

★

It was good to note—and must have been encouraging to Sir Hugh Carleton Greene—how enlightened MPs rose to the defence of the BBC's right to screen satirical attacks on any "worthy and important persons and institutions" without the risk of public or ministerial interference. A motion tabled by Tom Driberg and supported by Michael Foot and Reginald Paget (of Bradlaugh's old constituency, Northampton) deplored the "public displays of intemperate anger" over the now notorious birth control sketch; pointed out that a Roman Catholic MP, Norman St. John Stevas was able to condemn it on the same programme at the time; and congratulated the Director-General on "the generally high standard of the more serious BBC programmes". Mr. Driberg's motion urged Sir Hugh "to extend the producers' freedom to experiment, and while allowing reasonable time to minority interests and opinions, to ignore organised attacks by minority pressure groups." Television programmes which "shock and offend nobody" were, the motion suggested, "artistically and educationally worthless". And, it reminded the public—and the Catholics—that viewing was not compulsory. One could always switch off.

★

NORMAN ST. JOHN STEVAS defended what he called the "civilising notions" of heaven and hell in another appearance on BBC's *Not So Much A Programme . . .* The idea of rewarding good and punishing evil was beneficial, he argued. Agnostic Peter Hall of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre demurred on the grounds that concentration on a future life distracted responsibility from here and now. Novelist John Bowen, who said he had lived without God for some years, touched on the modern view of heaven and hell: the one the continued presence and the other the continued absence of God. And if he had to choose between them Mr. Bowen would choose hell.

★

MEMBERS of the Rationalist Association of South Africa received the news of the ban on their Chairman, Professor Edward Roux with "deep indignation" and "strong resentment". They know that he never in any way "promoted Communism" and that his activities in the Association had always been perfectly lawful. They record their warm appreciation of Dr. Roux's splendid services to the rationalist cause. The ban is obviously a heavy blow to the Association, but the members declare their "collective determination to carry on the work". That assurance, they believe, is "the best tribute and thanks" they can offer him.

★

THE first (March) issue of *Heresy*, the duplicated magazine of the Richmond and Twickenham Humanist Group, is well written and produced. The Editor is Nigel Sinnott, 80 Forest Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey.

The Shudder before Death

By R. SMITH

"ONLY the dead have no fear," runs an old Spanish saying, and we may add, no care or anxiety either. A man is surely something of a corpse if he cannot shiver. And in that sense Heidegger is right in proclaiming that anxiety is rooted in the fear of death.

Mr. Colin McCall says, in so far as he is aware, he is not "squeamish" about death. That may be so in his case, but it is very questionable if he is entirely free of anxiety regarding his own death. Freethinkers may discuss their own deaths rationally and make what provision they can for their dependants, but this is in no way a full proof antidote to abolish the despair and anguish which dying entails. It is perhaps cleaner and more genuine, as Leo Chestov said, to expire like a dog in a ditch than, even, like Socrates discoursing, with forced calm, among his friends.

"Consciousness of death need not entail anguish and despair," says Mr. McCall. But we all know that it does, and therefore it is futile to argue otherwise. Most people can hardly face up to life without drinks or drugs or some other sugar pill, let alone face up to death authentically. Sublimating death by religious decorum, or cheapening it by hygienic rationalism is only another way of concealing and fleeing from death.

Mr. McCall thinks it is quite invalid to label an Epicurean or a Spinozan view of death, "superficial". He is of course quite entitled to think so, just as one is quite entitled not to take the question of death seriously at all.

I would say the Epicurean view of death is superficial because it is just another way of refusing to treat the subject of death seriously. What mother is not concerned with the dying and death of her child? The Epicurean view, "Death does not concern us," is not only superficial, but also callous.

Spinoza's view regarding death, it must be remembered, springs from his Pantheism, and I don't think Mr. McCall is a pantheist. It is indeed questionable if the "free man" that Spinoza writes about really exists. If he does he is an exception to the rule because man is forced to live with the knowledge that he is fastened to a dying animal. No theology or theodicy of death can overcome that fact.

The "free man" of Spinoza is aware of death, but his wordly wisdom is superficial from the point of view of what dying entails. Wordly wisdom must spring from the knowledge of death and the fear of death, for without it all living things would soon cease to exist. Mr. McCall also thinks my mistake is to treat death as the fact, when it is merely a fact along with many others. He forgets here that death is the major factor in life, and we give significance and profundity to it because it concerns us all.

My pessimism obviously does not suit the temperament and attitude of Mr. McCall, as he seems to think it somewhat of a bugbear, whereas I think the bugbear lies with the optimistic rationalist who will not face up fairly and squarely to the tragic conditions of the human predicament. It may do well for Mr. McCall and his friends who think like him to remember the words Oscar Wilde said in prison: "The supreme vice is shallowness". Wilde had to enter prison before he began to properly understand the world, something he could never have done in the Café Royal. The same thing applies to despair and dying, for it is here we get the knowledge of the grim reality which dispels all our illusions, and not just a contingent fact.

Heidegger is quite right to bring death to the forefront

in philosophy. In fact to dismiss death from philosophy, is like dismissing the Prince of Denmark from Shakespeare's Hamlet.

REPLY

MR. SMITH should try his hand at horror stories sometime; I am sure he would do well. I fear, however, that he has no head for logic. Take his first paragraph. We may agree that a man is "something of a corpse if he cannot shiver", but I trust that we should recognise it as a metaphorical statement and see that there is no justification for deducing from it that "anxiety is rooted in the fear of death"—whether or not the latter proclamation be true.

He questions if I am entirely free from anxiety regarding my own death. I prefer to say—because it better describes the position—that I enjoy living and therefore don't want to die. How I shall feel when I am old and decrepit is another matter. But it is a big leap from doubting entire freedom from anxiety to asserting despair and anguish. It is a leap, nevertheless, that Mr. Smith takes with no compunction. Likewise, in his final paragraph, he implies that the only alternative to bringing death to the "forefront" is to dismiss it. I can only repeat what I said in my last contribution to this discussion: that death is a fact but not *the* fact.

It is perhaps cleaner and more genuine, Mr. Smith cites Leo Chestov as saying, to expire like a dog in a ditch than like Socrates, discoursing with forced calm. However much emphasis is placed on the qualifying "perhaps", this remark is absurd. "Cleaner" has no relevance and "genuine" no meaning. If we wish to discuss the question at all, it must obviously be in relation to Socrates, and who is to say that a calm death was not "genuine" in his case?

It will be noticed that Mr. Smith hurls his "genuines" and "authenticities", his "profound" and "significant"—and of course his contrasting "superficial" and "shallow"—around alarmingly. Spinoza's wisdom is superficial, we are told, "from the point of view of what dying entails". The Epicurean view is "not only superficial, but callous". But what *does* dying "entail"? Mr. Smith doesn't tell us.

What he does is betray a muddled, emotional form of dualism. Man is not, as Mr. Smith suggests, "fastened to a dying animal": man is a living animal who, sooner or later, will die. In fact, the person who so often links free-thinking with Christianity is himself much closer to the latter—especially in its Calvinistic form (it may be significant that he is a Scot). Life is horrible, death hideous. One would feel sorry for him were he not so arrogant.

I should leave Mr. Smith in his awful dilemma were it not for his misrepresentation of Epicurus. It is not true that the Greek philosopher refused to treat the subject of death seriously. On the contrary he recognised religion and death (or what followed it) as the great causes of fear in man. He set out, therefore, to try to remove these (connected) fears rationally and, as he himself endured pain with fortitude, his was not purely a theoretical argument. And in his will he provided for the children of one of his dead disciples, Metrodorus. If I had to summarise Epicurus's basic teaching, it was the prudent pursuit of pleasure or avoidance of pain, and it is still a good basic guide to living.

Finally—and surely fitting Mr. Smith's case—here are

a few words from that great Epicurean poet, Lucretius (in the Penguin translation by Ronald Latham): "When you find a man treating it as a grievance that after death he will either moulder in the grave or fall a prey to flames or to the jaws of predatory beasts, be sure that his utterance does not ring true. Subconsciously his heart is stabbed by a secret dread, however loudly the man himself may disavow the belief that after death he will still experience sensation . . . When a living man confronts the thought that after death his body will be mauled by birds and beasts of prey, he is filled with self-pity. He does not banish himself from the scene nor distinguish sharply enough between himself and that abandoned carcass. He visualises that object as himself and infects it with his own feelings as an onlooker."

COLIN MCCALL

HUGH MACDIARMID

(Concluded from page 99)

As he approached middle-age, MacDiarmid all but abandoned the lyrical vein and began to write long discursive philosophical poems ("In Memoriam James Joyce", "The Kind of Poetry I Want", "The Battle Continues") in which he attempted the immense task of synthesising all knowledge and creating as he put it "a seamless garment, a poetry of fact and science". Endless allusions from recondite systems of thought and countless quotations in many different languages are hurled at the reader. But MacDiarmid refused to be deflected from his purpose by the complaints of admirers of his former verse.

I am forty-six, of tenacious long-lived country folk
Fools regret my poetic change, from my "enchanted early lyrics"
But I have found in Marxism all that I need . . .
It only remains to perfect myself in this new mode
That is the poetry I want—all
I can regard now as poetry at all
As poetry of today not of the past
A Communist poetry . . .

—"The Kind of Poetry I Want".

I used to write sic bonny sangs
A'body wi' pleasure and profit could read
Even yet a bit discipline's a' that I need
To mak' myself ane o' the greatest poets
Puir Scotland's ever managed to breed.
Why dae I turn my back on a' that
And write this horrible rubbish instead?
—Sustain me, spirit o' God that I pay
These seductive voices nae heed.

—"Stony Limits", 1934.

In spite of their complexity, there are many passages of tremendous power and beauty in the later poems. At times he is depressed by the moronic emptiness of mind and non-understanding of his fellow-Scots:

Anywhere you go in Scotland today
You can hear the people
Economising consciousness.
Struggling to think and feel as little as possible
Just as you can hear a countryside in winter
Crepitating in the grip of an increasing frost.

—"The Battle Continues."

But he derives hope and comfort from the fact that all major reforms have been achieved by a minority, a mere handful of dedicated individuals. He believes rather optimistically perhaps in the emergence of "a new mutation in the soul of man, as a result of which his consciousness will be so enlarged as to be capable of conceiving and pursuing ends commensurate with his technical mastery of means". At any rate, MacDiarmid is determined:

Never to be turned into a strong silenced man
For I am corn and not chaff and will neither
Be blown away by the wind, nor burst with the flail
But will abide them both
And in the end prevail
For I am like Zamyatin: I must be a Bolshevik
Before the Revolution, but I'll cease to be one quick

When Communism comes to rule the roost
For real literature can exist only when it's produced
By madmen, hermits, heretics,
Dreamers, rebels, sceptics,
And such a door of utterance has been given to me
As none may close, whosoever they be.

MacDiarmid is essentially an intellectual poet, and has an intense dislike of all prophets of unreason whether they be of the left or the right. At the famous Writers' Conference at the Edinburgh Festival in 1962, he attacked violently "writers who believe that the central issues of life today with which literature should deal are sexual perversion, and the vicious habits of beatniks and layabouts". Obviously, MacDiarmid is not "with it", though in some of his poems, for example "A glass of pure water", he comes very near to the attitude of those modern Zen "hipsters", Kerouac and Burroughs.

MacDiarmid has always been an out-and-out atheist. Moreover, his atheism is of the extreme militant type. He thoroughly dislikes the term humanism because of its association with humanitarianism—anything suggestive of softness or sentimentality is anathema to him. (In an extravagant outburst he once exclaimed: "I have no use for humanity but only for the highest brain centres. I would sacrifice a million people any day for one immortal lyric".) Christianity, he rejects outright. As Mr. Duncan Glen says in his recent biography (*Hugh MacDiarmid and the Scottish Literary Renaissance*—by far the fullest and best account of the poet's life and work yet produced): "An acceptance of Christian beliefs and dogmas is for MacDiarmid not freedom but slavery to fear and superstition. He equates Sunday Schools and religious instruction with brain washing and subliminal propaganda . . . he believes it to be necessary to break out from the comfortable and confining refuge of the Christian religion into the difficult but free world of unfettered intellectual thought".

Scotland has treated her greatest modern son disgracefully. For years he lived in penury (when he moved to a cottage in the Shetland Isles in 1933, his wife had to make the furniture out of orange boxes) and even today, he is far from well off, his present small home having been fitted with running water and electricity only recently. His *Collected Poems* (1962) were originally published by Macmillan of New York as no Scottish publishing firm would handle them! But at long last he is now being universally recognised as one of the foremost literary figures of the twentieth century, worthy as a poet to stand alongside, Eliot, Yeats and Pound. By his genius, he restored and strengthened the proud Scottish image which had been tarnished and degraded by the sentimental vapourings of the "Kailyard School", the egregious Harry Lauder and all the haggis and bagpipe brigade. Let us leave him ever seeking for his "city on the hill".

The unsearchable masterpiece, the music of the spheres.
Alpha and Omega, the omnific Word.

CHURCH TAX EXEMPTION CASE DISMISSED

A LAWSUIT originally brought by Mrs. Madalyn Murray (who now resides in Hawaii) challenging tax exemption in Baltimore has been dismissed by the Maryland Circuit Court. Attorney Leonard Kerpelman, who successfully argued the Murray Bible-reading and prayer case before the US Supreme Court, has said that he will appeal against the ruling of Judge Wilson Barnes. Mr. Kerpelman estimated (according to *Church and State*, February 1965) that in Baltimore alone, exemption for churches resulted in an annual loss of \$76 million in tax revenue. Such an exemption was, he argued, a violation of the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the US Constitution.

Philosophy of Science—Some Facets

1—LAWS OF NATURE AND LAWS OF STATE

By DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

THE word "law" is a good example of the way confusion can arise when the same word is used, with different meanings, in everyday language and by specialists. "Law", in ordinary use, means a limitation on human behaviour laid down by a ruler or government; and that meaning implies an element of compulsion or restraint. A law of the state is a "prescriptive" law.

When a scientist talks of the "laws of science" or the "laws of nature" it is easy to let ideas of restraint and compulsion creep into our understanding of what he means. But the laws of nature are not compulsive or restraining; they merely describe certain regularities in the happenings of nature. They are not "prescriptive"; they are "descriptive".

Take one of Kepler's laws of planetary motion as an example: it says that a line joining a planet to its sun sweeps over equal areas in equal times. This is not a statement of rule laid down by some cosmic monarch and obeyed by the planets; it merely describes how the planets, in fact, behave. It may be objected that the planets are indeed restrained in their motions—by the forces of gravity which act on them. But the gravitational laws themselves are only a description of one of the ways in which pieces of matter influence each other. In their turn the laws of gravity are explained by the more general descriptive laws of relative theory, which in their turn will no doubt one day be explained by some still broader descriptive law.

This procedure of explaining each law by a more general one could only be brought to an end by the discovery of one complete description of how all matter behaves, and from which all the less general laws could be derived. And there would be nothing compelling matter to behave in accordance with this widest of laws; matter behaves as it does because it is what it is. Its nature determines its behaviour.

Confusion between laws of state and laws of science has led people to argue that because the former have a law-giver, so do the latter. In other words natural laws are used as an argument for the existence of God. But we have seen that scientific or natural laws are not rules but merely descriptions, and they cannot be used to support the idea of a mighty legislator.

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CORRESPONDENCE

"THE WANDERING JEW"

I have just finished reading *The Wandering Jew*. The print is the smallest and the turgidity of Sue's style is, to say the least, difficult. But it was worth the effort. It is the most rewarding book I've read in years. Why I never heard about it until recently I don't know. But it does raise the point that we younger Freethinkers have missed quite a lot, I mean in respect of what we can, surely regard as anti-religious classics like this.

I shall certainly do my best to get younger Freethinkers to read this book. It is a pity it can't be reprinted—and, perhaps, abridged to suit modern readers.

P. KEARNEY.

MARXISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Mirabile dictu! Even Mr. R. Smith, our exponent of Will, willy-nilly flowing, now admits the possibility of historical determinism. I will withdraw the word "chance" and substitute "circumstances", if it so pleases him. I do not think that the correct word has yet been coined, language being also subject to historical determinism. I used the word "chance" to indicate events outside the sociological processes which nevertheless influence those processes.

For instance, coast erosion; Dunwich, once a flourishing port with 50 churches, is now half a street and one perilous pub. The course of Dunwich history has been altered by a geographical condition. Or, for instance, the exact angle at which the arrow flew which pierced Harold Godwin's eye and ensured the success of the Norman invasion.

One can argue endlessly on the role of the individual in history just because it is impossible of proof. What is certain is, that the greatest intellect of antiquity could not have split the atom, though today a moron can do so by simply pushing the right button.

EVA EBURY.

[This correspondence is now closed.—ED.]

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The Freethinker

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A CORRESPONDENT recently mentioned the possible good effects that might have accrued at certain historical epochs from the assassination of certain reactionary figures. Adolf Hitler was actually mentioned as an example. Since when the recent assassination of Malcolm X has painfully underlined this controversial point at issue. Is assassination, whether religious (as apparently in the case of Malcolm X) political (as presumably in the case of President Kennedy) or for any other cause, ever morally permissible if not legally? Perhaps even more important, is it ever effective? For granting as we must—despite the rather confused protests of Mr. R. Smith—that historical conditions enable individuals (at least in exceptional circumstances) to influence the course of human evolution; is the assassination of key personalities ever either socially expedient or morally justifiable?

The End Justifies the Means

It would hardly be possible to pursue any serious theoretical discussion of this highly controversial subject without sooner or later coming up against the famous formula that "the end justifies the means". As is common knowledge nowadays, this advice has long been ascribed to the Jesuits, though its use by them has often been misunderstood. For whilst the institution founded by Ignatius Loyola certainly often behaved in a very equivocal way, and justified many morally ambiguous actions with a subtle casuistry which often seemed dishonest, it is surely obvious that no organisation could ever have advocated this aphorism in any entirely unambiguous and unqualified sense.

Certainly the Jesuits, who as Catholic theologians were bound not only by elementary logic (an important element in the Jesuit curriculum), but dogmatically by the positive decrees of the Church of Rome interpreted in a precise sense, could not possibly have propounded such a meaningless definition. Under the heading, "the end justifies the means", all that they actually did was to advocate such commonplaces of moral casuistry as, say, shooting is in itself an "indifferent" (i.e. non-moral) action, for it is only circumstances that equate it with morality.

For example, to shoot a mad dog in pursuit of a child is permissible (i.e. moral), whereas to shoot a peaceful wayfarer with intent to rob him is impermissible or immoral. The morality or immorality that results from the action of shooting is solely the effects of the contingent circumstances. In this sense everyone must agree that the end justifies the means. All schools of Catholic moral theology propound such commonplaces, and no evidence has so far been produced, at least as far as I know, that the Jesuits ever went beyond them in their theoretical formulations.

Regicide

Where these militant champions of the Counter-Reformation did give an opening to their critics, Catholic and Protestant alike, to accuse them plausibly of being basically amoral, was not in their theoretical formulations

which seem to have been impeccable, but in their interpretations and resulting actions. For several leading Jesuit theologians in the era of the Reformation (the Italian, Cardinal Bellarmine, and the Spanish Jesuits, Mariana and Suarez were the most important) arguing on strictly logical lines from the above premises, concluded that if it is agreed that it is lawful (i.e. morally permissible) to shoot a mad dog or an armed robber in defence of one's

secular goods, it is at least equally permissible to kill a heretic king or leader. It was in this and only in this sense, that the theologians of the order who promulgated the legality of regicide argued. But one can understand that these fine distinctions often driven home,

not only by Jesuit subtlety in controversy, but several times actually with the point of the assassin's dagger, did not always appeal to Protestant kings and leaders who were in continuous danger of abruptly departing from this transitory life! It was scarcely surprising that both in England and France the theological treatises of the Jesuit regicides were burned by the public hangman: in England under James I (1603-25) who had himself narrowly escaped being elevated to heaven by the Gunpowder Plot of Guy Fawkes, a fanatical pupil of the Jesuits, several of whom paid with their lives for their real, or alleged complicity in the notorious plot.

The Jesuit teaching on regicide met with much opposition even inside the Catholic Church. Actually, their most destructive critic was the French Catholic Jansenist, Pascal, whose critical *Provincial Letters* were largely responsible for giving the descriptive adjective "jesuitical" the unsavoury connotation of duplicity it has borne ever since. The principal Protestant monarchs assassinated by Jesuit-inspired regicides, were William the Silent (of Holland) and Henry IV of France. Pupils of the Jesuits were also responsible for attempts to murder both Elizabeth I and James I of England.

Political Assassination

So far we have confined the subject to religious murder, not nowadays the most common or important form of assassination. For even the Jesuits have ceased to advocate or practise it, and as Archbishop Roberts SJ, would confirm, it is no longer an "objection" to Roman Catholicism. However, politically-inspired assassination has played perhaps as important a role in the 20th century as did religious assassination in earlier centuries. How far is such "propaganda by the deed" (to use an old anarchist slogan) either morally permissible in the Jesuit sense or even efficacious politically? Is it true that the arbitrary taking of any individual's life can alter the course of history?

Assassination and the Social Order

The evolution of the social order has been from the primitive to the sophisticated; from the simple to the more complex, and this demonstrated sequence vitally affects the whole problem of political murder. For whereas in an early relatively unorganised society, the murder of

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Ethics of Assassination

By F. A. RIDLEY

a single prominent individual may actually have altered the essential direction of that society, with ever growing complexity modern society depends less and less upon any one person or group of people and more and more on complex groupings and mass-movements which become more and more immune from the effects of a single killing, however dramatic. Thus in a primitive society like that depicted in the Homeric Iliad or the biblical Book of Judges, the killing of a single obnoxious individual could and did produce immediate effects.

However, the republican murderers of Caesar were unable to save the republic by this most dramatically famous of all political assassinations. And the murder of President Kennedy did not produce either the millenium or the revolution, but only President L.B.J.! No doubt some exceptions can still be plausibly argued: if, say, Lenin or Hitler had been killed. But would it really have made all

that difference? As far as we can now judge, probably not.

In a much simpler society than our modern one, in Cromwellian England, the Leveller Sexby wrote probably the ablest and most eloquent defence of political murder ever penned, his *Killing no Murder* (1656). In this literary and analytical masterpiece, he argued persuasively that the death of Cromwell would bring about an English millenium. Now it so chanced that Cromwell did die (not actually murdered, but probably of the fear of dying in which Sexby's pamphlet played its part), but what happened was the Restoration—hardly a millenium! That was three centuries ago and the futility of assassination is far greater now. So much so indeed, that its former Jesuit and anarchist advocates have nowadays given it up. The fact that it still flourishes in the USA merely proves that a technically advanced society has not yet shed all traces of primitive violence.

Churchill on Prayers for Rain

THERE has recently been some speculation on the religious—or non-religious—beliefs of the late Sir Winston Churchill. While not deciding the question, the following letter written to the *Times* on June 12th, 1919, during a period of drought, reveals at least an element of scepticism in Winston Churchill's outlook. It was not published until many years later, and we should like to thank Mrs. Margaret Knight for supplying us with a copy of it.

Sir,
Observing reports in various newspapers that prayers are about to be offered for rain in order that the present serious drought may be terminated, I venture to suggest that great care should be taken in framing the appeal.

On the last occasion when this extreme step was resorted to the Duke of Rutland took the leading part with so much well-meaning enthusiasm that the resulting down-pour was not only sufficient for all immediate needs, but was considerably in excess of what was actually required, with the consequence that the agricultural community had no sooner been delivered from the drought than they were clamouring for a special interposition to relieve them from the deluge.

Profiting by this experience, we ought surely on this occasion to be extremely careful to state exactly what we want in precise terms, so as to obviate the possibility of any misunderstanding, and to economise so far as possible the need for these special appeals. After so many days of drought, it certainly does not seem unreasonable to ask for a change in the weather, and faith in a favourable response may well be fortified by actuarial probabilities.

While, therefore, welcoming the suggestion that His Grace should once again come forward, I cannot help feeling that the Board of Agriculture should first of all be consulted. They should draw up a schedule of the exact amount of rainfall required in the interests of this year's harvest in different parts of the country. This schedule could be placarded in the various places of worship at the time when the appeal is made. It would no doubt be unnecessary to read out the whole schedule during the service, so long as it was made clear at the time that this is what we have in our minds and what we actually want at the present serious juncture.

I feel sure that this would be a much more businesslike manner of dealing with the emergency than mere vague appeals for rain. But, after all, even this scheme, though greatly preferable to the haphazard methods previously employed, is in itself only a partial makeshift. What we

really require to pray for is the general amelioration of the British climate. What is the use of having these piecemeal interpositions—now asking for sunshine and now for rain? Would it not be far better to ascertain by scientific investigation, conducted under the auspices of a Royal Commission, what is the proportion of sunshine and rain best suited to the ripening of the British crops?

It would no doubt be necessary that other interests besides agriculture should be represented, but there should be a certain broad general reformation of the British weather upon which a now overwhelming consensus of opinion could be found. The proper proportion of rain to sunshine during each period of the year; the relegation of the rain largely to the hours of darkness; the apportionment of rain and sunshine as between different months, with proper reference not only to crops but to holidays; all these could receive due consideration. A really scientific basis of climatic reform would be achieved.

These reforms, when duly embodied in an official volume, could be made the object of the sustained appeals of the nation over many years, and embodied in general prayers of a permanent and not of an exceptional character. We should not then be forced from time to time to have recourse to such appeals at particular periods, which, since they are unrelated to any general plan, must run the risk of deranging the whole economy of nature, and involve the interruption and deflection of universal processes, causing reactions of the utmost complexity in many directions which it is impossible for us with our limited knowledge to foresee.

I urge you, Sir, to lend the weight of your powerful organ to the systematisation of our appeals for the reform of the British climate.

Yours very faithfully,

SCORPIO.

ABORTION LAW REFORM BEING KEPT UNDER REVIEW

AT question time in the House of Commons on March 26th, Mr. William Hamilton (Labour, Fife West) was told by Miss Alice Bacon, Minister of State, Home Office, that the Home Secretary was keeping the matter of abortion law reform under review, but could hold out no prospect of early legislation. Miss Bacon said that she had met a deputation from the Abortion Law Reform Association, and everything it had said was being carefully studied.

Ingersoll Nominated for Hall of Fame

THE 1965 election to the Hall of Fame of New York University was due to take place on April 1st. Among the nominations was Robert G. Ingersoll, American lawyer, orator and freethinker, who was born on August 11th, 1833 and died on July 21st, 1899. The following tributes in his support are taken from the American free-thought magazine, *Progressive World* (February 1965).

This is to give support to the candidacy of Robert G. Ingersoll for a place among those admitted in 1965 to the Hall of Fame. With the passing of the years it has become ever clearer that Ingersoll was the leading American of his day in upholding, through his own example, every man's right to think for himself and to say what he honestly believes. This is a right that is basic to all progress, and it is because we Americans do have a considerable measure of this right that we have been able to advance as no major people ever have advanced before.

The right to differ openly, honestly, and without unnecessary vituperation is one of the rights of which we should be most proud. It cannot be maintained unless it is continually practised and unless honour is accorded those who are outstanding in practising it, no matter how much we may differ with them. It is in fact in the expression of our honour despite our differences that we show our strength and sincerity in this area. That is what Ingersoll did. We should honour him fittingly before we can be condemned for not having honoured him if we really believe in the freedom that we profess.

HERMAN J. MULLER, Distinguished Service Professor
Indiana University, Nobel Prize Winner in Genetics

I am writing to nominate and urge the consideration of the name of Robert G. Ingersoll for inclusion in the Hall of Fame.

Robert G. Ingersoll, lecturer, teacher, writer and philosopher, was an outstanding exponent and influence for an extremely important element in the development of the intellectual and religious life of America. His thought is a significant expression of the rational and critical in the consideration of religious and moral problems. He combines the tradition of dissent and the affirmation of the American democratic process. In the period when Darwinism challenged conventional religious beliefs and had shaken the faith of millions he brought his brilliant and scholarly talents to bear on the problems of faith. He made many Americans who were in the churches and temples rethink and restate their affirmation in ways which squared with science and democratic values.

For the substantial numbers who were outside of traditional religion he was a leader and teacher who helped them restate the principles essential to a faith in man and in democracy. Among all the leaders of his generation he functioned as a gadfly, a challenge to conscience, but also throughout his writings one finds an affirmative philosophy of man involving disciplined thought and a great loving heart.

In the American struggle for freedom of mind, freedom of conscience and freedom of faith, for believers and unbelievers, the name of Ingersoll is a living force today as it was during his lifetime. For countless generations he will continue to have a great name in the roster that includes Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Emerson and John Dewey.

ALGERNON D. BLACK, Leader
New York Society for Ethical Culture

I am writing to recommend the candidacy of Robert G. Ingersoll for a place in the Hall of Fame of New York University. This I am very glad to do, since Ingersoll's writings were among the earliest religious literature which as a boy I read, and his *Mistakes of Moses* was my first introduction to the splendid literature of the Old Testament. His volumes were ranged on the shelves of my father's library, as they had a place among the books of every forward-looking American minister of those days. Ingersoll was not a trained Biblical scholar, but his lectures and writings played a most important role in liberalising the religious thinking of Americans during the post-Civil War period, and in preparing them to receive the modernised gospel created by the impact of Darwinian thought. He deserves an honoured place in the process of loosening the bonds of a literal-minded theological tradition and preparing the ground for the humanised religious thinking of the twentieth century.

Ingersoll also enjoyed a most significant part in the political life of nineteenth-century America. He was statesmanlike and widely influential in spreading the programme of an enlightened

and progressive Republicanism. The Republican party in those days, as today, needed all the enlightenment it could get, and Ingersoll rose nobly and intelligently to the opportunity.

Ingersoll is certainly a major figure in the intellectual and cultural life of the American people, and well deserves the recognition the Hall of Fame could give him.

JOHN HERMAN RANDALL, JR.
Woodbridge Professor of Philosophy Columbia University

Robert G. Ingersoll has given to Americans a great heritage in the historical image of his personal life and character. He was fearless, aggressive and rigidly conscientious in following his own convictions and ideals. At a time of intense controversy and widespread intolerance of the very idea of disbelief in a personal God, he applied to himself the term agnostic.

He chose to make of himself a balanced and rounded-out leader of men in several spheres, renouncing in so doing the much greater fame and material rewards that would have been his in exchange for single, intense application in any one of several fields. This was his deliberate decision, despite a childhood of harsh and narrow discipline. He had achieved brilliancy in statesmanlike politics, having held high office and gained recognition of the great probability of winning a higher position. He gained national acclaim as a famous lecturer, not only on agnosticism for which popular opinion has chiefly characterised him, but also for scholarly lectures on statesmen, scientists, great thinkers and writers. He took a foremost place as a leader of men at the bar, moving from a local sphere to that of the most important cases in the nation.

Engaged for many years in the bitterest polemics, he exhibited throughout his life extraordinary personal charm. The greatest of all challengers of conventional beliefs of an entire era, he conducted himself with impeccable propriety in all relationships.

For all Americans, whether of his religious persuasion or of completely opposite views, Ingersoll set an example of independent thinking, moderation and the constant use of common sense.

LE ROY BOWMAN, Retired Professor
Brooklyn College

I am glad to endorse the candidacy of Robert G. Ingersoll for election to the Hall of Fame.

As a teacher of public speaking it has been my privilege to show students of the art of speaking how the great master, Robert G. Ingersoll, influenced his generation and succeeding generations through his platform appearances. I do not suppose there is any American orator who has been more anthologised than Robert G. Ingersoll. His funeral oration at the grave of his brother is a classic. So also is his renowned address "The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child".

Think of the orators in his own generation that he influenced: Darrow, Debs, Beveridge, and many others. Albert J. Beveridge called him one of the four great orators America has produced.

His cry against all fetters that seek to bind the human mind and heart can still be heard, and it is now important that it be heard today. I am always glad to lead my students to him. Often students become enchanted with his power and read all of him.

One of his great friendships was with Walt Whitman. Bliss Perry paints an unforgettable picture of him as he raised funds for Walt's declining years and as they spent the night together talking, talking.

If anyone is to be in the Hall of Fame, surely Honest Bob should be!

LIONEL CROCKER, Head Department of Speech
Denison University, Granville, Ohio

In this day when the freedom of thought and speech is being threatened as never since the Alien and Sedition Acts, it is well for the American people to take notice of and to remember Robert G. Ingersoll. It makes little difference whether one agrees with all that he said and did. The important thing is that he dared to speak his mind even on unpopular subjects and to take the consequences. He stood for the right of every American to freedom of thought and to freedom of speech. That is a priceless contribution.

AVERY CRAVEN, Professor of American History
University of Chicago

I am advised that Col. Robert G. Ingersoll has been nominated for a place in the Hall of Fame of New York University. I am very glad to second the nomination.

Apart from pre-eminence as one of the nation's most felicitous and persuasive orators, Col. Ingersoll had a seminal role in forming that climate of opinion in our country which, in spite of

(Concluded on page 108)

This Believing World

IS ANYONE surprised that some hospital visitors are good enough to leave sick patients Christian tracts with such intriguing titles as, "Are you ready to die?" and of course—"Are you saved?" (*Daily Mail*, 18/3/65) It appears that some patients have been "very disturbed", and some have even declined necessary operations "because of what was said in pamphlets". But surely the tract distributors were doing the work of Christ in trying to bring sick people nearer to God. Yet we have the Rev. G. A. D. Mann, Secretary of the Free Church Hospital Chaplaincy Board refusing to allow any more of the tracts to be distributed. The tract donors "have no ministerial training", he says. As if that matters!

★

THE VATICAN seems to be getting into another jam as serious in its way as whether Catholic women should be allowed to use contraceptives or not, or whether evolution is true or not. It is simply whether it is going to hand over a £23,000,000 tax deficit to the Italian government. Experts estimate that the Vatican has £5,000,000,000 in the kitty (*Daily Mirror*, 2/3/65), and it is known to have vast investments. Indeed an Italian left-wing newspaper calls the Vatican, "The biggest tax evader in the country". Not the right terms, surely to use for the earthly representative of God Almighty.

★

WE ALWAYS love to record the wise opinions of the Bishop of Southwark, and his latest quip, given in the *Daily Express* (4/3/65) is, "There is nothing in the Bible to suggest that Christianity will ever be a popular religion. A way of living based on obedience to divine sovereignty and self-sacrifice will never appeal to the majority". Well, well. And this after being taught at school that there is actually no easier religion to follow than Christianity, based as it was and is on the simple and easily followed precepts of "our Lord" meek and mild. Of course, in the ultimate, the one Christian precept universally followed was "Compel them to come in"—a much more efficient way than merely teaching them to do so.

★

HOW SUCCESSFUL this has been is shown by the assets in hard cash and property owned by the two successful branches in the business—the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England. Few industrial concerns have shown such a remarkable facility for gathering in the shekels in such enormous quantities. And the founder himself had nowhere to lay his head.

★

HOW OFTEN do we find the basest ingratitude when the things of God are in evidence for our appreciation! Here is Mr. W. Richards (*News of the World*, 14/3/65) spending £35,000 on building a new church in gratitude to the Lord for sparing his life 41 years ago, and nobody wants it, and it looks as if it will have to be turned into a Bingo hall. This is too terrible to contemplate. Can anyone imagine Jesus Christ conducting a Bingo game at full blast?

ADMISSION

There's hope and there's heart in it,
Men have their part in it,
Science and art deeply sound it;
So faith might be fed;
Had God simply said:
"I didn't create it—I found it."

A.E.C.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER

MEMBERS from Birmingham, Bradford, Leicester, Nottingham, Stockport and Taunton were among those who attended the 59th Annual Dinner of the National Secular Society at the Horse Shoe Hotel, London. The Guest of Honour was Leo Abse, MP, and David Tribe, president of the Society was in the Chair.

Mr. Tribe introduced Mr. Abse as, "the MP for human relations" and referred to the many progressive causes for which he had worked. These included divorce law reform, improvement of prison conditions, and the implementation of the sections of the Wolfenden Report relating to homosexuality. Despite his support of causes for which it is constantly claimed that public opinion was not ready, Mr. Abse's share of the vote in his constituency of Pontypool had increased at every election. Mr. Tribe declared that Mr. Abse was an example to the social conscience of the nation.

In reply, Mr. Abse declared that it was rather strange that he should be there among Secularists. As long as anti-semitism persisted, he would always be diffident about dissociating himself from Judaism, but he had been forced into a position of opposition to religion by the extraordinary attitudes of religious leaders who regularly opposed measures which his clinical experience as a lawyer had shown him to be necessary.

The public, however, were more concerned with a rational approach to family matters than with religious theories. Morality should not be dependent upon religion. Secularists and Humanists have a great responsibility for showing a rational morality and proving that man can live upright without religion.

Peter Cotes proposed a toast to the National Secular Society, and commended modern trends in its activities. He congratulated the Society on using twentieth century weapons to meet twentieth century problems. Mr. Cotes concluded by expressing pleasure at seeing so many long-standing members present.

William Miller (Chairman of the Birmingham Branch) replying on behalf of the Society, said the Dinner should be a celebration. We had at last broken through into the mass media and received wide publicity in the press, on radio and on television.

The current Roman Catholic discussions on birth control were too late, said Mr. Miller. Catholic women were already deciding matters for themselves. But we must continue to work to rid the world of fear and superstition. Current progress was the result not only of the efforts made in the past twelve months, but of years of work by Secularist pioneers, whose example should encourage us.

Mr. C. Bradlaugh Bonner, President of the World Union of Freethinkers, and Mr. W. Griffiths, Treasurer of the National Secular Society, sent greetings. M. McI.

INGERSOLL NOMINATED FOR HALL OF FAME

(Concluded from page 107)

inertia and active resistance, helps to transvalue the First Amendment to the Constitution from a pious aspiration into a powerful force in the American way of life. Especially on issues of religious freedom for agnostics and unbelievers as well as true believers, he received a wider hearing and won more general tolerance than any other single champion of freedom of conscience and thought, not excepting such Founding Fathers as Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, whose faith in the freedom of the mind and the toleration of differences he reaffirmed, extended, and developed a broader public acceptance for. Col. Ingersoll's place is assuredly with them among the nation's famous men.

HORACE M. KALLEN, Retired Professor
New School for Social Research, New York, N.Y.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

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Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill), Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, April 4th, 6.45 p.m.: J. B. DURK, "The Problem of Freewill".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, April 4th, 6.30 p.m.: ARTHUR SMITH, "Osteopathy".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenter's Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, April 4th, 7.30 p.m.: DAVID TRIBE, "Secular Vineyard".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, April 4th, 11 a.m.: DR. MAURICE BURTON, "Automation in Biological Studies".

Tuesday, April 6th, 7.30 p.m.: TREVOR HATTON, "Prison Conditions in Modern England".

Surbiton and Malden & Coombe and Kingston Branches NSS (The White Hart, Kingston Bridge, Hampton Wick), Friday, April 2nd, 8 p.m.: PETER FRYER, "The Fruits of Philosophy".

Notes and News

CYRIL CONNOLLY was right (in the *Sunday Times*, 21/3/65) to take up the implications of Lord Devlin's religious and authoritarian attitude to law and morality in his book of lectures, *The Enforcement of Morals* (Oxford, 25s.). Lord Devlin returns again and again in his lectures to two topics: Mill on Liberty and the Wolfenden Report, quoting a key phrase from each "in order to consider and reconsider various forms of demolishing them." He does not, Mr. Connolly said, "really grasp the nature of homosexuals" and "leaves the impression that to revise the law here would be a confession of weakness". As a Catholic, Lord Devlin regards marriage as a sacrament and he would like to see a greater readiness to withhold divorce, and a refusal to grant guilty parties the automatic right to re-marry. In fact, his marriage "reforms" are marked by what Mr. Connolly terms a "general aridity".

★

MILL held that the only purpose for which power could rightly be exercised over a member of a civilised society against his will was to prevent harm to others. His own

good, either physical or moral, was "not a sufficient warrant". And the view of the Wolfenden Report was that it was not the function of the law "to intervene in the private life of citizens or to seek to enforce any particular pattern of behaviour", apart from preventing harm to others. Crime should not be equated with sin: "there must remain a realm of private morality and immorality which is, in brief and crude terms, not the law's business". Contrast these libertarian statements with the rigidity of Lord Devlin. "Those who believe in God and that He made man in His image will," he writes, "believe also that He gave to each in equal measure the knowledge of good and evil, placing it not in the intellect wherein His grant to some was more bountiful than to others, but in the heart and understanding, building there in each man the temple of the Holy Ghost".

★

POPE PAUL VI has given his blessing to the Rotary Club, previously condemned by the Vatican (notably in 1929 and 1951) apparently because it didn't require its members to profess any religious faith. "That aspect of your programme caused the Church concern", the Pope said, "because we feared it might encourage the introduction of other ideologies into your group, or that your members would think that the Rotarian code was sufficient to meet man's spiritual needs". The *Guardian's* Rome correspondent, George Armstrong, suggested that the Holy Office had thought and possibly still did think it could detect "the faint odour of Masonry coming from the Rotarians' innocent-looking monthly cottage pie" (22/3/65) and he reminded us that the Boy Scout movement in Italy was regarded as "potentially seditious" until it came under Church control. Mr. Armstrong also reported that, before leaving the Vatican, Rotary Club officials presented the Pope with a cheque "for an undisclosed amount" to be used for Catholic Church charities.

★

ATHEISM is rife among teachers in schools at Dover, Deal and Sandwich, if several speakers at the Divisional Education Executive are to be believed (*Kent Messenger*, 12/3/65). There was "a considerable amount of militant atheism among teachers", said Councillor J. Blake of Deal; some of them were "propagating atheism to good purpose", added the Rev. Ewart Roberts. The Executive was debating a motion from a Roman Catholic priest, Father Terence Tanner: "That this divisional executive is concerned about the influence of religious teaching on the conduct of children and young people, and expresses the view that such teaching should only be given by teachers who are convinced Christians". It was decided by 17 votes to 2 to make the motion a resolution at the annual conference of the National Association of Divisional Executives. And Mr. A. D. Hewlett, the Divisional Education Officer, said that he would circulate the motion to all heads of schools in the area. So if atheism is as "rife" as the speakers alleged, Christian teachers may well soon be complaining of overwork.

★

"No teacher is compelled to give religious instruction," commented Mr. V. T. Ferguson of Deal and Sandwich NUT. It was his experience that "those teachers who are agnostics, or atheists ask to be relieved of giving religious instruction." And in a press release (16/3/65) the National Secular Society described RI as "an ecclesiastico-political intrusion into the life of the school". The Agreed Syllabuses were not, it said, "impartial statements about the Christian faith", but "vehicles of special pleading and attempted brainwashing."

On the Box

By TOM PRICE

(The Director of Religious Broadcasting, Television Britannicus, is discussing the programme schedule with his production secretary.)

Sir Alex Grovel: Now, Miss Smith, what have we on the saintly schedule this month?

Miss Smith: Just the usual stock stuff so far. A touch of the old ecumenicals. Another bit about the Dead Sea Scrolls. A soupcon of Schweitzer. A couple of Sunday afternoon services from remote Welsh chapels—did you know that Cwm Rhondda is now top of the Protestant pops? There's a chat about life between a bishop and a very attractive young film starlet. We haven't fixed the actress yet, but there are plenty of volunteers from the bishops. Then there's a very uplifting group discussion among the East Cheam Boy Scouts on how to build a mission hut in Mongolia . . . and I think we may dig up the odd nun or two for a debate on The Pill. We seem to be sweating on ideas for *Sunday Brake* but I've sent plenty of scouts out into the Mothers' Union branches and the skiffle clubs and we ought to be okay there. If we're stuck, we can always do something about Smethwick . . .

Sir Alex: Yes . . . yes. But have we got anything with pep, zing and go? Anything "with it"? Anything really . . . sexy? There's been an alarming drop in the viewing figures lately, Miss Smith. We could do with something way out to entice the admass from *Panorama* and *Compact*. Something . . . gritty.

Miss Smith: We *could* bash the poor old Jehovah's Witnesses, I suppose. We could probably arrange a *Face to Face* interview between one of the ministers and the director of the Blood Transfusion Service . . .

Sir Alex: God preserve us!

Miss Smith: Well, what about the Mormons? They could put on a display of their gold plate, and tell people how to stop smoking. And we haven't even touched the Exclusive Brethren . . .

Sir Alex: Contain yourself, Miss Smith. We don't want minority groups. Anyway, we are not against smoking. Half the clergy would be a dead loss if they couldn't suck their pipes during the programme.

Miss Smith (desperately): There's that offer from the Salvation Army to put on a massed beat group of 4,000 female guitarists all twanging away to the tune of "Rock me to Jesus . . ."

Sir Alex: Old hat. I'm fed up with all this folk-songism. Can't we have some decent music for a change?

Miss Smith: What about *Colour-Bar*? We've literally hundreds of nice blackies on our books. They're all itching to earn a bob or two—and most of them can sing as well . . .

Sir Alex: Done to death. The average viewer today is looking for kicks. Give him Sammy Davis, Jr., conducting High Mass and he won't blink and eyelash.

Miss Smith: One thing we haven't done—drugs. How about an RC priest, a Buddhist monk and an Anglican parson; sit 'em in the studio, give 'em a few reefers and some purple hearts and let them compare the experience with . . . let's call it "A Superior Ecstasy"?

Sir Alex: Wow! There's a germ of an idea there. Perhaps they could all go to one of these all-night teenage dope clubs and see if they can make a few conversions? Make some wonderful candid pictures . . .

Miss Smith: I've got one lined up already—a bishop who

says he's prepared to do anything if I can get him on the Box. Mind you, the teenagers might be a bit difficult. They're getting more cautious these days. Won't look at the camera without a fat fee . . . But wait, Sir Alex—there is one thing we haven't done which could be arranged quite easily . . .

Sir Alex: What's that? You mean put an atheist on the programme? Miss Smith, I've told you before—no, no, no. Completely out of our area. Last time the Other channel had one he wouldn't stop talking and I suspect he was tiddly—and a Communist to boot. Always remember that this is a religious outfit, Miss Smith. Let one of 'em in and all the other people will be saying they're atheists so they can get into the act.

Miss Smith: The trouble is, sir, that most of the available scientists, doctors, writers, social workers, philosophers and historians seem to be that way inclined. It's as much as I can do to get them even to give a mention to the Almighty.

Sir Alex: Yes . . . I know what you mean. Thank God that most of them seem to be *Christian* atheists, at any rate.

Miss Smith: One good thing—we *have* managed to fix up the *Eventide Reflections* for the month. We've got that nice Manchester clergyman who talks about the football results, and the RC priest who was saved from the demon drink, and that chap with the beard—all the ladies, er, love him . . .

Sir Alex: Good show. But tell them to put more blood into it. More local colour. Less gospel and more guts. Yes, Miss Smith—glamour, guts and God, in that order. That's the formula.

Miss Smith (cooly): Oh, Sir Alex! You are a one!

The BBC and Marx

MARX—in the second of the BBC's three television programmes on Jewish thinkers who had challenged Christianity—proved to be made of much sterner stuff than had Freud a fortnight earlier. Or rather his disciples did. True, Martin Milligan referred to a "marvellous, heightened" sense of the dignity of man to be got from the New Testament, but he clearly expressed the distinction between the Marxist view of man working out his own salvation "on earth by earthly processes" and Christian "redemption". And Philip Thody and Gerry Cohen developed this despite constant interruptions from the Rev. Joseph McCulloch. Christianity was concerned with saving people's souls, whereas Marx concentrated on this life. A "travesty", protested Mr. McCulloch. Christianity was concerned with attaining "real" life. He didn't elucidate.

The Rev. Werner Pelz's comparison of Marx with an Old Testament prophet had point. But efforts of Mr. Pelz and chairman Brian Redhead to show the closeness of Marxism and Christianity were in vain. And Jerry Cohen's final Marxist comment, "We don't see how there is anything greater than the whole of human history", carried the day.

The last programme in the series due to be shown on March 31st, will be devoted to Ludwig Wittgenstein, author of the *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*.

Dr. Zeitlin and The Crucifixion

By H. CUTNER

MR. F. A. RIDLEY's generous tribute to Dr. Zeitlin's scholarship is thoroughly deserved, and few unbiased people can deny that from his examination of Jewish and Christian authorities, Dr. Zeitlin has proved his case. I heartily concur with him that the Jews did *not* crucify Jesus.

Dr. Zeitlin stresses that his argument is based on "history". "I am not" he says (THE FREETHINKER, January 15th), "dealing with any theological problems or hypotheses, but am analysing the records as a historian", and he has every right to do so. He will allow me the same right to deal with the problem, not only from the viewpoint of history, but also from theology if I do wish it. I cannot see how any problem relating to the Jews and Jesus can be considered only from the point of view of history.

In the first place, what history? The "history" of the Gospels? Any "history" which takes angels and devils, myths and miracles, seriously, is not history at all. And once again I must stress—as I have often done in these pages—that if one believes in the existence of the kind of God we have depicted for us in the Bible, there is no need to worry about miracles. The biggest miracle is God Almighty, and there should never be any difficulty in believing the lesser miracles. Why Muslims should stress the existence of one God only, Allah, as proof that Islam is superior to other religions, passes my comprehension. One God or many is alike nonsense.

Without producing any evidence that Pilate said this or Jesus answered that, Dr. Zeitlin takes for granted the Christian "records"—the Gospels—and argues from them his own case as a historian. But did Pilate say what he quotes, in Greek? Did Pilate know a word of Greek? Was the trial of Jesus conducted in Greek? As a historian, Dr. Zeitlin who is very quick in pointing out what is or is not found in some of the manuscripts we have of the Gospels, never touches this point. Who is responsible for the Greek Gospels—old and new? Or to put the matter in another way, unless Dr. Zeitlin can produce evidence that the Gospels are authentic, how can they be cited as authorities.

It may be said that he is only quoting them to show how contradictory they are, how it is impossible to trust Matthew, for example, because John contradicts him, and so on. Well, of course the way the Gospels do contradict each other is certainly a proof that they cannot be relied upon. But the contradictions are very well known to most Christian students of the New Testament, but still they believe. They believe just as strongly that the Jews *did* crucify Jesus, and they are very unlikely to give up their scapegoats just because of a few contradictions in the Gospels.

Dr. Zeitlin is perfectly right when he says that "the Apostolic Fathers did not make the accusation of the crucifixion against the Jews", and some of them appear also to have known precious little about Jesus. In fact, while the Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles (we are told) are products of the first century, and are packed with all kinds of stories about Jesus, second century Christian writers like Theophilus and Athenogarus, are quite silent about Jesus, and as for second century Pagan writers, some appear never to have heard of Christianity either.

One of Dr. Zeitlin's historical authorities is Justin Martyr who was, Dr. Zeitlin says, "the first one to blame the Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus". Well, Justin had

a long dialogue with Trypho, a Jew, who roared with laughter at some of the imbecilities uttered by his opponent. And Trypho roundly told him that the Christians had "invented" Jesus, that nothing was known about him, not even where he was born. Now, how could Trypho have said all this if the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles had been in existence? Here are his exact words, according to the translation in the Ante-Nicene Library:

But Christ, if he has indeed been born and exists anywhere, is unknown, and does not even know himself . . . and you, having accepted a groundless report, invent a Christ for yourselves, and for his sake are inconsiderately perishing . . .

The *Dialogue* with Trypho is not a Jewish document, but a Christian one, and is said to have been "published" about 150 AD. We thus have the testimony of a renowned Christian admitting that there were Jews then who denied the historicity of Christ. This being the case, there could have been no crucifixion if he was right. But in addition, we have the testimony of Irenaeus, another of Dr. Zeitlin's authorities, who just as emphatically declared that Jesus was "an old man" when he died, and there is nothing following this emphatic statement that he was crucified. Moreover, if Jesus was an old man when he died, he couldn't have been crucified under Pontius Pilate who died in 37 AD.

Here then we have two very famous Christian authorities—one of them, it is true, only quoting his Jewish opponent—who, if they are right, proved as far back as 150 AD and 180 AD that the Jews did not crucify Jesus. And what is the Christian reply? Irenaeus is almost wholly ignored. In his brilliant survey of ancient religions, *Anacalypsis*, Godfrey Higgins points out, "The Church has been guilty of the oversight of letting this passage from Irenaeus escape". While the American, Judge Waite, in his *History of Christianity* is even more scathing, though the passage is too long to quote here.

But the testimonies of Justin and Irenaeus help to prove that the Gospel accounts of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus stamp them as pure fiction. As John E. Remsburg insists, "There was no Christ to crucify, and Jesus of Nazareth, if he existed, was not crucified". (*The Christ*, page 294.)

We can put the problem in another way. Christians and Jews both believe that there was a crucifixion. Christians do so because for them the Gospels are divinely true. Jews do so these days because they are tickled to death to see how a Jew is worshipped as God Almighty; and if formerly, they had hinted, as Trypho bluntly did, that the story of Jesus had been invented, it might have resulted in the wholesale massacres of unfortunate men, women and children, by Christian hordes. "How long must our mythology, with all its attendant evils, rule and curse the world? How long must an innocent people suffer for an alleged crime that was never committed?" Remsburg wrote this nearly 60 years ago.

HUMANIST HOLIDAYS

Humanist Holidays for Rationalists and friends of the Movement, Derbyshire, 14th-28th or 30th August: Camping delightful site near Hathersage, Swimming Pool, Blue John Mines, Castleton, Dales. Primarily for children, but a few adults welcome. Large tent available for boys; others bring own. Gas cooking. Share expenses. Mrs. M. Mephram, 29 Fairview Road, Sutton, Surrey. (Humanist Holiday Centres for all ages, Holland and Sussex, waiting list only.)

Philosophy of Science—Some Facets

2—SCIENTIFIC & UNSCIENTIFIC PROPOSITIONS

By DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

THE sentence "There will be an eclipse of the sun in the year 2000" is a scientific proposition. So is "Cigarette smoking causes lung cancer". But the ancient metaphysical propositions "God exists" and "There is an unknowable substance behind all appearances" are not scientific. What then is the difference between these two pairs of propositions that makes the first pair scientific and the second pair not.

Certain philosophers of science hold that a proposition is scientific if, when it is true, it can be verified by observation. Let us look at our four examples.

Obviously it will be possible in 2000 to verify, by direct observation, the prediction about an eclipse of the sun. The proposition about cigarette smoking is also verifiable, but the method will be indirect and statistical; it is due to this indirectness that current arguments are possible about whether or not the proposition has already been verified.

There seems little likelihood of there ever being a method of verification, acceptable to science, of the proposition "God exists". The supposed nature of the deity rules out direct observation. Indirect verification would only be possible if God caused certain events which could not be explained by natural laws. But such "miraculous" events could never be detected; there could never be certainty that a natural explanation would not be found.

The final proposition "There is an unknowable substance behind all appearances" need hardly be discussed. If the substance is unknowable then its existence is unverifiable. All verification depends on appearances; our substance is lost behind them.

There is an objection to this whole thesis that "verifiability" is the means of deciding between scientific and unscientific propositions. For it is easy to frame theories that are so complete in their powers of explanation that any event serves to verify them.

For example, according to certain psychiatric theories, feelings of either inferiority or superiority can be confirmation of inferiority complex—in the latter case the patient is compensating for his illness. In a similar way, no well-indoctrinated Marxist would fail to show that today's events, whatever they are, are certain confirmation of Marxist theories. Like the astrologers, they cannot lose.

Karl Popper has suggested that, to pass as scientific, a proposition should be "falsifiable" rather than verifiable. In other words a scientific theory should allow predictions of events which, if false, can be observed to be so. Sound scientific work passes this test but we get rid of some bad psychiatry, the Communists and the astrologers.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE ODISIOUS, THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE USEFUL

The problem of what to do with the old parish churches is one which Mr. Jesse Collins well faces (19/3/65). They have a considerable potential use as meeting-places and the like, a curious link with part of their original medieval purpose for the community. Yet one must question the curious attitude of F. H. Snow upon this point. Not every ancient parish church is regarded by everybody as beautiful as such. But this question of beauty must be a subjective test and a more objective approach is to ask whether the building contains points of architectural or historical interest. A Norman building may not be beautiful to a great many people yet it may contain detailed elements of considerable importance illustrating Norman methods of building and design. Or again, a medieval church may be illustrative of the manner in which buildings of this period grew and may contain many examples of various phases of Gothic architecture. From the historian's viewpoint, much knowledge of objective history is contained within old church buildings simply because other sources are lacking.

To give but one obvious example, much of the history of English costume is illustrated by the surviving monumental brasses. The Church was the sole existing art patron in the Middle Ages for reasons not very creditable to theology. Thus, it is to the Church that the art historian must turn. Nor is it without interest that the various denominations themselves have ignored this point very largely. A great deal of the sheer architectural vandalism in this field which has taken place since the war has had the support of denominational officials. But we must beware of merely subjective tests based upon utility and taste. It has been the prevalence of this attitude which has led to the wholesale destruction during recent years of a great deal of Georgian and Victorian architecture of various kinds and to the resulting losses for culture and understanding.

It is clear nowadays that a number of old churches have no potential use ecclesiastically or theologically. Congregations have shrunk to vanishing point and show no signs of revival. But this fact creates problems not unlike those which faced William Morris and the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings almost a century ago. The subjective iconoclasm of F. H. Snow may be far from good thinking in these fields. It may be in fact a greater contribution to freedom of thought to secure the preservation of an old building and its adaptation to modern secular needs than to sweep it away in order that one more site may be left for some faceless block of glass and concrete which our successors will probably denounce with a venom far greater than that shown by F. H. Snow to the most pedestrian piece of medieval Gothic architecture.

F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

THE AGNOSTIC

May I as a reader of THE FREETHINKER and a Secularist for twenty-five years, register a strong protest regarding Douglas Bramwell's statement (26/2/65) in which he states that: "Sitting on the fence—being an agnostic—is perhaps the most comfortable position in the arguments between the atheists and the believers." And more to the same effect.

May I assure Mr. Bramwell that the Agnostic is no comfort seeker but holds his opinion on the same basis as Mr. Bramwell himself—namely honest conviction. If agnosticism describes a person's frame of mind, then he has a perfect right to use the term. The great T. H. Huxley, who coined the phrase was certainly no comfort seeker, but was foremost in the battle for freethought.

E. MARKLEY

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THERE have in the last fifteen years been two notable contributions to our understanding of John Stuart Mill: Professor F. A. Hayek's volume of the correspondence with Harriet Taylor, published in 1951, and Michael St. John Packe's biography in 1954. But neither has lessened—nor is any future work likely to lessen—the significance of Mill's own *Autobiography*, which Harold Laski described as a "document of the first importance in the intellectual history of the nineteenth century."

When Mill's stepdaughter, Helen Taylor, first prepared the *Autobiography* for publication in 1873, she omitted certain passages about herself, at the request of Mill's first biographer, Alexander Bain. These were first restored by John Jacob Coss in the Columbia University Press edition of 1924 (reprinted 1944), Laski having been refused permission to include them in the Oxford University Press version published in the same year. A new American paperback edition of attractive format (Signet Classics, 6s.) retains the 1873 text with the usual asterisks to indicate excisions. And in his foreword, Asa Briggs returns to Bain's view that Mill not only manifestly exaggerated Helen Taylor's ability but "outraged all reasonable credulity" in writing of her mother's (his wife's) "matchless genius, without being able to supply any corroborating testimony".

Harriet Taylor

Certainly the pages (in the *Autobiography*) on Harriet are fulsome to the point of embarrassment, and for Mill to talk of his work as the product of three minds (Harriet's, Helen's and his own) of which his own was the "least original", was absurd. (Helen was perhaps well advised to omit the last part of this.) The fact remains that Harriet had an enormous influence on Mill's work—as great, Professor Hayek has said, as Mill asserts, though "in a way somewhat different from what is commonly believed". It was not the sentimental but "the rationalist element in Mill's thought which was mainly strengthened by her influence". Professor Hayek knew of "only one study" which had "correctly seen the nature of this influence as it now reveals itself", a "little known essay" by the Swedish writer Knut Hagberg, dated 1930. Yet, three years earlier (in *Modern Humanists Reconsidered*), J. M. Robertson had denied Harriet Taylor's alleged anti-intellectual influence on Mill and had noted her "rather strikingly rationalistic mind" which "deserves more careful biographical attention than it has received".

Education

Robertson held that "the unstable element in Mill, the tendency to waver in judgment and in scientific procedure under emotional pressures" was there independently of Harriet. And that, though "specially trained and largely gifted to play the part of a new rational force [he] was not so gifted in the fullest degree, and owed much of his actual superiority to his methodical training by his father". James Mill's training of his son (Greek at three, Latin at seven, etc.) has been strongly criticised and, indeed used by

Christians as an awful example of rationalistic education. Clearly, it was, as Mill noted in the *Autobiography*, lacking in both tenderness and practicality. But, says Professor Briggs, whatever its deficiencies, it produced John Stuart Mill. Likewise, whatever the deficiencies of Benthamism, "it set Mill on a way of thinking that was both practical and creative". And, whatever the intellectual capacities of Harriet, "she made Mill happier and more secure than he might otherwise have been".

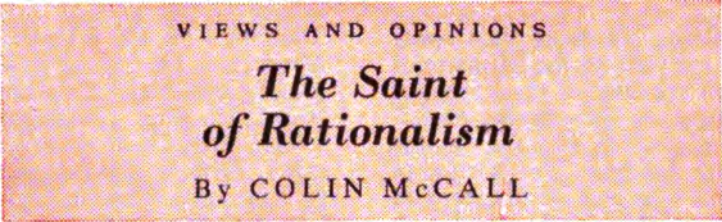
Ethics

It is hard, now, to appreciate the full import of Mill. We must remember that he grew up in a country with no general franchise, no popular education, with universities under the control of the Church and trade

unionism restricted by the law of conspiracy. That things are different today is in no small measure due to him and the Benthamite school of which he was a product. Faults may be found with his logic or his economics, criticisms be made of *On Liberty* (though not those of Lord Devlin); these in no way detract from the profound and beneficial effect of Utilitarianism on English thought and life. It is surely significant that an English Catholic judge today, should see Mill as the representative of libertarian theory who needs must be refuted in the interests of *The Enforcement of Morals*. And Alan Ryan, reviewing Lord Devlin's book in *New Society* (March 25th) was right to show that Mill was more radical than Lord Devlin's other target, the Wolfenden Committee. Mill was not "hampered by wanting to fit the idea of sin into his ethics", nor "concerned to throw any sop to popular or religious prejudice".

Living Influence

Mill, in fact, is a living influence today, and it is through the *Autobiography* above all his works, that we can appreciate why. Politically he held the right balance between individualism and socialism, supporting, for instance, co-operation, compulsory education, universal suffrage, the legal limitation of working hours, and public assistance. True individuality, he believed, could best be achieved under socialism, but an intellectual revolution was a necessary pre-condition of social change. "I am now convinced," he wrote in the *Autobiography*, "that no great improvements in the lot of mankind are possible until a great change takes place in the fundamental constitution of their modes of thought". It is no exaggeration to say that he, more than anybody, prepared the way for the late-Victorian reforms. In Mill's thought, Trevelyan, has said, "democracy and bureaucracy were to work together, and it is largely on these lines that the social fabric of modern England has in fact been constructed, even after Mill himself and his philosophy had passed out of fashion". And this is not to mention his influence abroad, especially in the United States. Gladstone, as we all know, called Mill, "the saint of rationalism"; we should not forget that it was this rationalist "saint" who pointed the way to modern, libertarian democracy. I am, Mill said, "one of the very few examples, in this country, of one who has not thrown off religious belief, but never had it: I grew up in a



negative state with regard to it. I looked upon the modern exactly as I did upon the ancient religion, as something which in no other way concerned me."

It is to the *Autobiography* that we turn to discover, not only how Mill's own opinions were formed, but how he influenced "the mind of a people". In writing a life one does not, he said in a letter to his wife, "undertake to tell everything". But "it ought to be on the whole a fair representation". This, the *Autobiography* proved to be. It describes his childhood and early education the "moral"

influences in his early youth, the "last stage of education and first of self-education", his youthful propagandism in the *Westminster Review*, his mental crisis, the "most valuable friendship" of his life, and so on. But it was also written to assist "the destruction of error and prejudice and the growth of just feelings and true opinions". And there can be no doubt that it had that effect.

It remains, today, essential reading for radical and rationalist; for all who would understand our modern society and the Utilitarians who prepared the way for it.

A Disaffected Profession

By E. G. MACFARLANE

ALTHOUGH I have been a teacher for more than thirty years I have remained almost unaware of the existence of a very deep and widespread disapproval of the impact of the representatives of the Church on the teaching profession. As a result of an article which appeared in the *Scottish Daily Mail* under the heading "I'm Victim of Religion—Teacher" in which I told part of the story of what had happened to me at the hands of people with religious prejudices and anti-humanist prejudices, I found myself being given further information about the dark and dirty deeds which take place behind the scenes in the teaching profession, and which are all too often inspired by religious or quasi-religious motives not unconnected with the economic motives of higher pay or positions of power and influence.

I am not a great seeker after wealth or power, but when I found that a job was going and that I had somehow been cut out of the running for it, I started making inquiries which brought results that were both enlightening to me and quite disgusting in other respects. So I spoke out, and began to hear many other things which all added up to the simple fact that teaching is more than a bit of a rat-race; that there is a great undertow of disaffection present among the members of the teaching profession which is very largely due to the part played by church representatives on education committees, and to the fact that the present legal set-up in Britain gives these people very great economic power over members of the teaching profession. So I am no longer concerned merely with my own special case but more with the general situation which my questions began to bring to light.

It appears that many teachers who become worldly wise at an early stage of their development, soon see that it is important to woo the religious members of the education committees, with a view to getting their votes when a chance of promotion comes along. Several instances have been given to me of teachers who changed from a Presbyterian church to a Scottish Episcopal church in Dundee, for no other reason than that the minister of the church in question had been made a co-opted religious representative on the education committee. Some other Churches have become famous among such worldly-wisemen in the teaching profession as being "helpful" up the promotion ladder. And some ministers, whom I could name if necessary, have been pretty blunt to teachers who went canvassing for their support in the matter of promotion:—

Teacher:—Oh, I just called to let you know that I have applied for a post which will become a matter of decision shortly and I wondered if you could help me in this connection.

Minister:—Are you an elder in the Church?

Teacher:—Well as a matter of fact I'm not.

Minister:—That is no good to me or the Church at all. Don't come back to me hoping for my support until you become an elder. Goodnight!

This works with the worldly wisemen and other hypocrites, perhaps, but one can imagine the effect it is going to have on a genuine Christian or a genuine Humanist. The callous attitude outrages the former and enrages the latter. Only the hypocrite takes the hint in the spirit in which it is given. Off he goes and makes the necessary arrangements, and back he goes to see the pleased smile on the face of the minister, which plainly says "I see you are a man after my own heart—no time for this silly business of taking any beliefs of any kind seriously!"

I have learned that those I am calling worldly-wisemen among teachers are often regarded as sneaky and cautious types by their colleagues and, although they get promotion all right, they neither enjoy it very much themselves nor are they endeared to the teachers around them. The result is that teaching is a seriously disaffected profession in the dictionary meaning of these words. Many are frankly disgusted with the whole set-up, and it is not only the anti-Christians who feel this. Instead of being respected, headmasters are often secretly and sometimes openly despised by all but their own kind. It is becoming better understood how church connections, nepotism, secret society connections, various craft organisations, etc., have been used in the process of becoming a headmaster.

The process has of course its tasks as well as its rewards. The headmaster who has used the Church to get himself a well-paid post has in a sense "had his back scratched" and the church people naturally expect something in return. I don't stand much chance when technical qualifications and educational abilities take second place to support of the churches. Still I have no regrets about having lived as an outspoken anti-Christian. I shall probably die without getting beyond assistant teacher stage on the promotion ladder. But I am naive enough to believe that it is important to be truthful rather than two-faced. I certainly feel more comfortable in my own mind.

At the same time I should like to see some changes made in the educational set-up in Britain to remove the power of these church vultures who prey on money-hungry teachers for the support of their out-of-date witch-doctor establishments.

This central rottenness, which stems from the ecclesiastical system in Britain, is due to be thoroughly rooted out. Let us get back—or forward to—a promotion system which is just, a system under which men will be encouraged to get better educational and technical qualifications as a means to self-advancement.

"Captive Schools" in the USA

By GAYLORD BRILEY

BEYOND doubt, 999 out of every 1,000 Americans have never in their lives heard the phrase "captive school". It is a phrase never published in newspapers or magazines, never broadcast over the radio or TV. So it might be well to offer, right now, a definition. A captive school is an American public school, supported by common taxation like any other public school, but controlled by the Roman Catholic Church and taught by nuns of the Roman Catholic Church.

Defined as such, a captive school would make a laughing-stock out of the Constitution and the principle of church-state separation. Yet the unhappy fact is that hundreds of captive schools exist, and all over the United States.

In a typical captive school, the Mother Superior of the local convent is the principal; religious images hang from classroom walls; and all the students are taught the Baltimore (official) catechism. Most, or all, of the classes are conducted by nuns, robed in the distinctive garb of their calling and under the most solemn vows to advance the Roman Catholic religion in everything they do. And money supporting the schools comes from the pockets of Protestants, Jews and other non-Catholics.

Many captive schools follow the pattern of two in Conejos County, Colorado, near the New Mexico state line. During the Depression, the community of Antonio was getting so little revenue from impoverished taxpayers that the city fathers were about ready to close down the schools. But then the Benedictine sisters volunteered to operate the schools for the county, at low salaries. This they have been doing ever since—and with considerable benefit to their Church.

In the 1962-1963 school year—the local paper listed "Sister Bernice" as superintendent of the Antonio public schools. That same year, 26 of the 37 teachers employed were Benedictine nuns. (Only one of the 11 lay teachers was not a member of the Catholic Church, though this is a minor point.) Salaries paid by taxpayers to the 26 nuns ranged between \$80,000 and \$100,000—and the nuns turned all of that straight back to their Church. Not one penny in federal or state income taxes was deducted. Now, since the Church allots these dedicated women about \$600 each for annual living expenses, the Church in Antonio gets a gross profit of \$64,400 to \$84,000 a year. And this is ample reason for the Church fathers not to ship the entire convent to one of the many teacher-shy Catholic parishes in other parts of the country. In nearby Denver, for example, at least one parochial school stands empty for lack of nuns to staff it. The priest, Father Joseph Koontz of Notre Dame parish, told *Denver Post* reporters that it would be several years before his new 14-classroom school house could be put to use because there was no community of nuns available. Apparently his parish could not offer the Benedictines anything to beat what they get in Antonio.

Captive schools such as those in Antonio are found mostly in central states. Kansas has about 50, Indiana, perhaps 30. Fifteen are known in Kentucky. In Illinois, the same. Texas and Ohio each have 22. Current investigation indicates that, all told, captive schools may be found in as many as 20 states. The total number of fully-fledged captive schools: 200 to 300. Across America, nuns teach in as many as 500 public schools. Many of them are listed in both the state public school directory and the official Catholic directory, meaning they are claimed by both the

public school board and by Catholic diocesan authorities.

For the slow-to-believe, here are some of the towns known to have public-parochial schools: Hays, Kansas; Tell City, Indiana; Marion County, Kentucky; Kalida, Ohio; Teutopolis, Illinois. There are many others, and each, like these, would be a story worth telling.

Hays is unusual in being a town where men of good will have worked with Catholic authorities to obtain the gradual removal of nuns from the public-school system, and they are apparently succeeding.

In Tell City, Protestant children attend a school that seems doubly old and run-down in comparison with the parochial school, which sparkles close by and houses the town's Catholic children. The parochial school has been built with the earnings of nuns employed as teachers in the public school.

In Marion County, Catholics in control of the school board were alleged in court to have "starved" a regular public school in order to favour two nearby captive schools.

Kalida enjoyed a brief notoriety in 1959 when Protestant families began moving away after receiving threats of physical violence because they objected to Kalida's captive school.

The story at Teutopolis is more political, involving the gerrymandering of school-district lines so that Protestants would go to a non-Catholic public school and Catholics would go to a "public" school operated for Catholics only by the Sisters of Notre Dame.

Captive schools flourish in small towns and rural backwaters. Often there is strong ethnic or religious unity to the settlement that makes politicians think of it as a solid voting bloc and disregard minority group rights. Teutopolis, Illinois, for instance, was settled by German Catholics in 1838. Political log-rolling in such places can take the form of ignoring laws and winking at the existence of a captive school. Rarely is there trouble—unless some outsider comes in and thinks the community should join the United States. If new industry brings in new residents, or the political balance is in some other way upset, only then does the captive school rate mention in the newspapers.

One reason captive schools flourish is that often political skulduggery goes hand in hand with running a public-parochial school. If a group of men break the law for what they think is a good cause—hiring nuns as public schoolteachers—they can easily move on to breaking the law for personal profit. Even when there is a public clamour to remove nuns from a public school, the school-board members and the local politicians may remain deaf. Remove the nuns, and the Catholic hierarchy might be offended; offend them, and certain other irregularities in the public school system might suddenly come to light. Then too, a new principal or school superintendent brought in to smooth things over, might turn out to be old fashionedly conscientious.

Probably the entire school board of one captive school in a central state could be jailed for not complying with state laws governing school purchases. Instead of calling for competitive bids on purchases of fuel, lunches, and other supplies, the gentlemen of the school board simply award one another contracts. Other legal niceties, like choosing next year's teachers, are handled by the local priest.

(Concluded on page 118)

This Believing World

THE FINER knotty points of Catholic theology appear to have given way, these troublesome days, for an out-and-out discussion on birth control methods for Catholic believers. And this, in spite of the Pope's plea, conveyed by Cardinal Heenan, for silence. Father Cocker in particular must be causing quite a headache in the Vatican.

★

HE NOW faces an indefinite spell in "a retreat", unless he mends his ways and obeys his Church without question as all good Catholics should. But he won't give in. He maintains that Catholics should be free to choose for themselves on such an important question as birth control. We have an idea that the good Father is lucky in being able to express his views these days, and he owes this to the liberal atmosphere achieved after centuries of struggle. Freethinkers like Dolet, Bruno, Servetus, and many others fought the Church at the cost of their lives; Father Cocker is reaping the benefit.

★

WHETHER Christianity is declining or not, it is still a money-spinner, and looks like being one for a long time yet. The last play the late Peter Howard wrote for the Moral Re-Armament Group, *Mr. Brown Comes to Town*—which is really not about Mr. Brown but about Jesus—has been sold for £16,000. It has been turned into a television production, and no doubt will continue to bring in holy dividends all over the world. There has always been "money magic" in the story of "our Lord" anywhere, and this new production is no exception.

★

THAT stout old campaigner for Christian virtues, Tom Driberg, MP, detests those equally stout Christian upholders of a genuine Sabbath, the Lord's Day Observance Society. Some weeks ago Mr. Driberg attacked its "almost arrogant infallibility", though he suggested that the Society made a noise out of all proportion to its size. One passage in a pamphlet it has published is "One wonders at the long-suffering of God. As in the days of Methuselah, He is waiting for his people to turn again . . .". Floods, train disasters, air and motor car accidents prove, according to the LDOS, that God is "chastening us his children". Mr. Driberg calls this "an appallingly blasphemous thought", but it appears to be exactly what many earnest Christians have thought and many continue to think.

F. A. HORNIBROOK

F. A. HORNIBROOK, who died in hospital at Gerrard's Cross, Buckinghamshire, on March 31st, was one of the best known and best liked of London Freethinkers. A physiotherapist by profession, he was a splendid advertisement for his own common-sense health theories, and it was only a few weeks ago—on his 89th birthday—that he was giving his usual "fine and dandy" answer to inquiries about his health.

An intimate friend of the late Chapman Cohen, Mr. Hornibrook had long been a member of the National Secular Society Executive Committee, and was President of the Society's Marble Arch Branch; he was also on the board of the Secular Society Ltd., and had been for a time joint editor of *THE FREETHINKER*. He had lived in Australia and New Zealand (serving with the ANZAC forces in the first world war) and kept in close touch with the Rationalist Associations of those countries. Though kindly and considerate by nature he hated hypocrisy and was forthright and pungent in argument. His autobiography was fittingly entitled *Without Fear or Favour*.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife, Nina.

The "Clean Up" TV Campaign

By DENNIS KERNAN

THE Portsmouth Humanist Society has recently investigated the origins and intentions of what is generally known as the "Clean up TV Campaign". We feel that this campaign is a definite threat to the expression of liberal and humanist views on television and radio and consequently we are writing to our local MPs, to the Director General of the BBC and to the Postmaster-General asking that they resist these attempts to impose censorship.

There are many MPs who have liberal and humanist views but it would greatly strengthen their hand if they knew that their views had support among their constituents. To this end we have appended a few facts concerning the "Campaign" in the hope that your readers may be interested in discussing them and taking similar action to our own in order to publicise their views.

The Campaign was originally called "Women of Britain Clean up TV Campaign" the title being subsequently expanded to "Men and Women of etc."

The Campaign was launched in January, 1964, by a Mrs. N. Buckland, wife of the Rector of Longton, Staffs., and Mrs. M. Whitehouse, a schoolmistress, of Wolverhampton.

It is claimed that their manifesto—reproduced below—has received 3,000 signatures.

The manifesto reads:—

1. We men and women of Britain believe in a Christian way of life.
2. We want it for our children and our country.
3. We deplore present day attempts to belittle or destroy it, and in particular we object to the propaganda of disbelief, doubt and dirt that the BBC pours into millions of homes through the television screen.
4. Crime, violence, illegitimacy and venereal disease are steadily increasing, yet the BBC employs people whose ideas and advice pander to the lowest in human nature, and accompany this with a stream of suggestive and erotic plays which present promiscuity, infidelity and drinking as normal and inevitable.
5. We call upon the BBC for a radical change of policy and demand programmes which build character instead of destroying it, which encourage and sustain faith in God and bring Him back to the heart of our family and national life."

The intention is to present the manifesto on the floor of the House of Commons this month with the idea of obtaining support from MPs for the formation of a viewers' council with a voice in the planning and policy of the BBC and ITV.

We would draw your attention to the following points:—

- (a) Both sponsors are militant members of MRA, an organisation well known as an extreme religious pressure group and currently spending £6,000,000 per year on its various campaigns.
- (b) The campaign is presented as a spontaneous upsurge of public feeling, whereas it is, in fact, highly organised and skilfully conducted.
- (c) Articles 1, 2 and 5 of the manifesto indicate that any programme with a humanist content, whether it be philosophical, scientific or literary, would be totally censored.
- (d) By emphasising the highly emotive words "dirt", "crime", "violence", etc., the campaign's sponsors hope to camouflage their real aim—censorship of all views not sustaining a belief in God.
- (e) Evidence of the unrepresentative nature of the signatories is given in a letter from one of the sponsors in which it is claimed that "one lady in Liverpool got 20,000 names in three weeks by circularising all the churches in her area."

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.
London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.
(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.
Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.
Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.
North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.
Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Crawley Humanist Group (AEU Building, Robinson Road, High Street), Sunday, April 11th, 7.30 p.m.: DAVID TRIBE, "Humanism and Responsibility".
Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, April 11th, 6.30 p.m.: Dr. A. F. AKRAM SAYEED, "Islam".
Manchester Branch NSS (Wheatsheaf Hotel, High Street), Sunday, April 11th, 7.30 p.m.: A meeting.
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, April 11th, 11 a.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM, "Human Nature".
Tuesday, April 13th, 7.30 p.m.: DAVID TRIBE, "The Role of Secularism".
Surbiton and Malden & Coombe and Kingston Branches NSS (The White Hart, Kingston Bridge, Hampton Wick), Friday, April 9th, 8 p.m.: A meeting.

Notes and News

THE FREETHINKER is identified in some readers' minds with the National Secular Society. This arises partly from the sharing of the same address, partly from a broad similarity of outlook, and partly because we carry notices and reports of NSS functions. We should like to emphasise, however, that THE FREETHINKER is, and always has been, a completely independent paper, neither the organ of nor responsible to the NSS, but the property of G. W. Foote & Co. Ltd., and administered by the board of that company.

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THE POPE—it was reported from Vatican City on March 29th—had called for the utmost urgency in reviewing the Roman Catholic attitude towards birth control because the Church "cannot ignore" the world's population explosion. And he had asked the birth control commission to give "absolutely clear indication" on the issue. The Church, he said, owed an answer to the world and to men and women whose married life was too often impeded by uncertainties from developing "according to God". The Church, of course, already has an answer—the complete condemnation of all so-called "artificial" methods of contraception—but it is no longer practicable, because it is no longer enforceable. And there can be little doubt that

the Pope's speech presages a change from that laid down by his infallible predecessors. As Freethinkers we shall welcome that change, and the reduction in human suffering that will follow, but we are under no delusion about its cause. It will come not because the Church cannot ignore the population explosion, but because it cannot ignore the revolt in its own ranks.

★

COMPULSORY religious instruction in primary schools was criticised by the Confederation for the Advancement of State Education (CASE) in a statement to the Central Advisory Council, reported by the *Guardian* (29/3/65). The present situation was unsatisfactory, CASE said, and if RI was not abolished, the quality of teaching and the syllabus should be "vastly improved".

★

IN a second letter to the *New Statesman* (26/3/65), the American columnist, John Crosby, replied to critics of his earlier attack on Roman Catholic "terrorism" (THE FREETHINKER, 26/3/65). "Heaven forbid"—one critic had written—that birth control "should ever be anything but a matter of private expediency or, at the worst, of private conscience". "Well, heaven does forbid it," Mr. Crosby commented. And he cited the Catholic-inspired Connecticut law against birth control clinics, even for non-Catholics. Another writer, William Pinder, had referred to Mr. Crosby's "snivelling, cliché-ridden claptrap", which "seeks to dismiss in one malodorous breath the entire history of Catholic culture and education from Thomas Aquinas to Ronald Knox." Pointing out that he did no such thing but said only that Catholics had contributed very little to American culture and American education, Mr. Crosby retorted: "I am not aware that Thomas Aquinas or Ronald Knox were Americans".

THE two letters were, Mr. Crosby said, splendid examples of the "Catholic terrorism" to which he had originally referred. He had written a letter, "mild in tone, extremely factual": he had been answered by "diatribes studded with phrases like 'near-hysterical irrelevances', 'snivelling cliché-ridden claptrap', and 'in one malodorous breath'." Catholics may vilify Protestants in any terms, but Protestants "may not even whisper the mildest criticism against Catholics".

★

DID God make the world in six days? Are we to believe that the human race is descended from Adam and Eve? These are two of the "trickier" questions addressed in all seriousness by the *Sunday Post* to Dr. William Barclay, Professor of New Testament Studies at Trinity College, Glasgow (21/3/65). Needless to say, the Professor regarded them only as fables, but it was a "fact" that God *did* make the world. And Christ's miracles should be seen symbolically: "Feeding the multitude. Teaching people to be unselfish. Stilling the storm. Putting peace into the disciples, and our hearts." But the "miracles of people"—healing, restoring sight—these Dr. Barclay accepted as fact. As for the feeding of the five thousand: "Here Christ is saying that those who have should share with those who have not. In other words, don't be selfish".

★

WE must say, with all due respect to the Professor of New Testament Studies, that Christ's seems an extravagant and long-winded way of saying "Don't be selfish". But then, we never were symbolically inclined. It was, however, another remark of Dr. Barclay's that disturbed us most. "No one in their senses," he said, "believes thousands can be fed with a few small fishes". There must, in other words have been an awful lot of crazy Christians.

"Captive Schools" in the USA

(Concluded from page 115)

Indiana has strict laws against transferring students out of their school district unless they pay tuition. But the board of a captive school there blithely allows Catholic students to criss-cross district lines without charge so they can attend the public-parochial school (and learn all about respect for the law).

In a Kansas captive school, some of the heaviest pressure on board members to keep the nuns on the public payroll comes from avaricious businessmen of all faiths, who realise that their taxes would go up if the town had to pay living wages to its teachers. The nuns, in this instance, offer their services for a lot less than an ordinary teacher would demand.

More of a puzzle is what inspires federal tax agents to overlook the nuns' salaries, from which no income tax is withheld. Some nuns employed by public schools in Indiana earn as much as \$7,500 a year. A married lay teacher in the same school, even one with children to support, would pay some tax, or at least file a return. But not these devoted women, who support neither family nor government but only their Church, which lets them out for hire. Since the federal government compels all other citizens to pay a tax on income "from whatever source derived", why the special treatment for this one denomination? The wearing of distinctive garb does not exempt a person from the duties of citizenship. These same sisters are carted out to vote in most elections.

Ask the Internal Revenue Service about this and the reply that filters down from on high is this: What the IRS hath joined together, let not taxpayer put asunder. Which, being interpreted, means, there is nothing you can do about it. The IRS says the nuns don't have to pay taxes like other mortals because they give all their income to their Church. But if you wanted to do the same thing for your religion, the IRS would not allow you to deduct more than 30 per cent.

Because of legal technicalities, it is impossible for a private citizen to acquire enough "standing" to make the courts compel the IRS to apply tax laws uniformly. An individual has to show that some substantial damage has been done to his interests before a court will listen.

This same legal principle prevents citizens in more enlightened sections of a state from compelling the dismissal of nuns from public teaching staffs in other sections. Unless some state official corrects the situation through administrative relief, a lawsuit is necessary. And it can only be filed by someone who can show hurt to himself. Usually this means a taxpayer in the afflicted community. How many such communities have so bold and untouchable a man? He must be rich, so he can afford to file a suit. He must not be in a vulnerable business, for it may be boycotted. He must have no immediate family, for they will be ostracised. He must have physical courage, for there may be threats to his person.

When a Negro has his civil rights infringed, the Justice Department is empowered to step in and obtain his rights for him. When a Protestant or Jew or anyone else wants to see the law of the land applied to a community with a captive school, who is there to go to bat for him? No one, as a rule, except the organisation known as Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Through direct assault, POAU has been instrumental in eliminating scores of these illicit schools from Missouri and New Mexico. Through negotiation with leaders of

both sides to settle matters without recourse to the courts. POAU has freed captive schools in other states. The mere threat of action by POAU closed down captive schools in Sterling, Colorado, and in Bremond, Texas. (These were merely strategic retreats, for had the cases gone to law, a single decision by the courts would have knocked out all other captive schools in the state concerned.)

There is wisdom behind these retreats, for embarrassing facts have a way of coming out in court. For example, the record of the famous case of *Zellers v. Huff* (the Dixon, New Mexico case) brought out the following: The "citizens built a school house and gave it to the County [Rio Arriba] to eliminate having their children attend the Church-owned school with Sisters as teachers. The school board then placed a Sister in charge of the new building." The public school at Ranchos de Taos was declared off-limits to the public during non-school hours by the priest. In court "the priest testified that acting on behalf of the Archbishop he exercised the absolute right to refuse admission to anybody he saw fit on the school grounds prior to 9 o'clock."

What will it take to remove all captive schools from the American scene? Certainly it could be done by a simple decree from the proper authority in the Church. Who knows? In this day of ecumenical advance and talk of church union, such a meaningful gesture might indeed be made. Or it could be done by intelligent public servants who would act from the realisation that religious freedom cannot long exist where the government is favouring one Church above others. Or else it must come the slow, sometimes bitter way of brother taking brother before bar of law and public opinion.

There is no doubt that captive schools must go. For if it is unlawful for the public to pay taxes in support of a school that is segregated by race, it is no more lawful for public taxes to support a school segregated by religion.

[Reprinted from *The American Rationalist*, February 1965.]

The Lay Apostolate

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

The Lay Apostolate: a Handbook for School Leavers is a 32-page booklet, edited by the League of Christ the King, and published by the Catholic Truth Society. It is divided into two parts, and designed to act as a *vademecum* for the young Catholic to nearly a couple of dozen "lay apostolate organisations" which cover many vocational groups, trades and professions. "On leaving school", it begins "we come into contact, perhaps for the first time in our lives, with people from very different backgrounds to our own, and people also with very different ideals." The author(s) can write confidently thus to their Catholic reader because they know that leaving school is the great break with the homogeneous cradle which parent and Church alike have conspired to give him in his youth; his first exposure to the really cold blasts of the wide and wicked world.

The Church is therefore concerned to give some salutary warning to her chickens, but she will make use of the situation too. For each Catholic is a bearer of his faith. He is that being, strange to Englishmen, an "RC". The

hand which moulds him in ways unknown even to himself, will impinge on each of his fellows. He will meet with curiosity, with hostility; each can be "dangerous" to him—each can be an opportunity. Whatever, wherever, he finds himself, that is what and where he believes to be the will of God for *him*. In work, in study, in his parish, in the family into which he was born and the family which he will make for himself, he can be an apostle. This is the theme—common enough to Catholics—of the first part of the pamphlet.

Part 2 descends to earth, to facts and figures, very quickly. It illustrates beyond all questionable doubt that whatever the occupational and avocational needs of a Catholic, they can be met by a large number of highly organised bodies with large memberships. Some very interesting facts emerge. Take a few at random.

There are eleven Catholic Teacher-Training Colleges in this country and the total membership of the Association of Catholic Teacher College Students is about 5,000; the purpose of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists is "to encourage all Catholic Workers, both men and women, to join their appropriate Trade Union . . . to promote better understanding of Christian and Catholic social principles"; the Catholic Nurses Guild of Great Britain has among its practical aims "to secure a conscience clause, whereby Catholic nurses may be exempt from any action contrary to the Natural Law of God" and "is prepared to investigate cases of victimisation on religious grounds."

Now we wouldn't want to force a Catholic nurses' conscience. Would the reverse always be true? Remember the mother and child case? And what of the consciences of agnostic nurses? I am told it is not always desirable for a student nurse openly to declare unbelief.

Turn to "The Union of Catholic Students". In every university in Britain, we read, "there exists a Catholic Society which is usually one of the societies of the University Union, but is always more than this—it is 'the Church within the university'." But, despite much discussion, there has never been founded in this country a Catholic University. Is there a reason for this?

Of the "Sodalities of Our Lady" we read that "In the reign of Elizabeth I the English sodalists met the priests when they landed from abroad, sheltered them, organised their pastoral journeys, ran an underground printing press . . ." Of its action today we read "Sodalists work to bring Christ back into Christmas and Holy Week by posters, live cribs, Calvary processions. They work for overseas students, better housing, against pornography. They sell Catholic papers, keep a Christian eye on the press and TV, run youth clubs, work in the university Catholic societies and in their trade unions and local governments. They are, alas, a model of activity for Freethinkers. Where they are, so should we be.

Young Christian Workers, the Newman Association, The Legion of Mary, The Grail, and so on. Have I not already written of their methods of infiltration? Rome has grown without ceasing over the past 135 years. This booklet is an attempt to show individual Catholics how to extend its influence even further. Costing only 9d., it has sold 25 thousand.

WINDOWS IN HEAVEN

The home-brew at the Vatican
sent Cardinal Sligo up the wall.

"Your Eminence pray clamber down,
or Father Flynne must pull . . . your leg."

OSWELL BLAKESTON

Philosophy of Science—Some Facets

3—LAW AND LOGIC

By DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

THE law "Water boils at 212 deg. F" is not merely stating what has happened in the past; it is predicting what will happen in the future. It is interesting that there is no logical justification for this extension of the law from the past into the future.

Take another humble case—an investigation into the colour of crows—

First crow observed is black
Second crow observed is black
Third crow observed is black
One-millionth crow observed is black

Therefore: All crows are black.

The conclusion has gone beyond the evidence by making a statement about all unseen and future crows. This passing beyond observed facts is called "induction" and philosophical battles have been, and are being, fought to decide whether it is a logically valid thing to do.

Looking at the tabulated argument about crows it is clear that it is not valid in the same way as a deductive argument such as

All swans are white
This bird is a swan

Therefore: This bird is white

where the conclusion is clearly contained in the two premises. As far as the crows are concerned there is no *deductive* logical reason why someone, one day, should not find a red crow. And there is no *deductive* logical reason why your local Water Board should not, one day, be perturbed by their water boiling in the mains at about 50 deg. F.

It may be said that there are very good *physical* reasons why crows and water should conform to past experience. But such physical reasons are themselves merely other natural laws for which no deductive logical reason exists for their continued conformity.

Because *deductive* logic cannot justify the scientist's law-making activity, some ingenious attempts have been made to construct an *inductive* logic. These usually take the form of a probability calculus.

It does seem, at first sight, that a statement such as "All crows are black" has a greater probability of being true if past observations have covered half-a-million crows rather than half-a-dozen. This idea is the basis of some extremely complex probability logics.

But why do we feel that laws based on many observations are more sound than those based on a few? Only because, in the past, they have proved to be so. The very point at issue is whether there is any logical reason why we should expect past trends to continue.

Perhaps the most common objection to the implications of these arguments is that "science works". At the risk of monotony the reply must again be that science having "worked" in the past does not logically imply that it will "work" in the future. Success is indeed science's only justification, but it is not the justification of logic. Science merely lifts itself by its own shoestrings.

Although we all feel confident that the shoestrings will not break, we can perhaps tease a few of the more naive theists. We can accept their evidence for some outrageous "miracle" and then deny that such happenings logically imply a divine intervention—they can just happen.

CORRESPONDENCE

HALF-TRUTHS

A much-voiced criticism of Christian propaganda in general and of MRA propaganda in particular, is that it only tells half the truth and thus actually distorts. I recently referred to one such case in *THE FREETHINKER*. A statement may be literally true but owing to further suppression conveys a half-truth. It then becomes nothing more nor less than a false representation. May I give two examples drawn from legal sources which pass judgment upon this type of behaviour not unknown as it is in the circles to which I refer?

Lord Chelmsford, speaking in the civil case of *Peek v. Gurney*, (1873), LR 6 HL 377 at 392, said: "Half the truth will sometimes amount to a real falsehood". His remark recalls to me the treatment of K's case in a recent MRA publication. In *R. V. Kysant*, (1932), 1 KB, 442, Wright, J. (afterwards Lord Wright) had no hesitation in holding that, under appropriate circumstances, such conduct might justify criminal charges of conspiracy and forgery. It is not without interest to apply these cases to the apologetics which emerge from certain circles or to recall the strictures which Dr. Coulton was able to justify against the methods of certain of his opponents. I need not make further comment. The whole subject indicts the habits and methods of Christian morality where truthfulness be concerned. With regard to MRA, it makes a strident demand on the physician to heal himself before he sets out to rearm other people morally!

F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

DEATH

Mr. McCall thinks that I should try my hand at horror stories. I may just do that sometime, but I don't think my horror stories would suit Mr. McCall, as they would be based too much upon human reality for him to enjoy.

He thinks I have no head for logic, but even in the words of his beloved Epicurus, "a bad logician may have a good understanding". Of course, Mr. McCall's logic is questionable, and one even wonders if it is indeed necessary on the given subject of dying and death. To be logical in the pedantic superficial manner of Mr. McCall is easy, but can one be logical to the bitter end? This seems almost impossible. Mr. McCall may be an exception to this, but that is questionable.

I found Mr. McCall's objections to my article "The Shudder before Death" to be of little value, nor do I think they will impress anyone who takes the subject of dying and death seriously. All the logic in the world cannot eradicate the fundamental facts about dying and death put forward in my article.

Mr. McCall claims that I do not say what dying entails. One wonders if this is really necessary to explain. Let it be suffice to say that dying is a sad and agonising and dirty business whether it takes place in a pauper's hovel or a king's palace.

Perhaps Leo Chestov in that respect is quite right in saying it may be cleaner and more genuine to expire like a dog in a ditch than like Socrates, discoursing with forced calm.

Mr. McCall enjoys living so much that he can't take dying and death seriously, nor can he stand anyone who does. His Epicurean escapism is only too obvious in his reluctance to even allow anxiety in being—towards—death. He recognises death as a fact, but that is about as far as it goes. But surely it must be a very important fact as in it, as Oswald Spengler says: "In the knowledge of death is originated the world-outlook which we possess as being men and not beasts".

Yet Mr. McCall boldly claims that by the nature of things, one can learn nothing whatever from dying.

Mr. McCall thinks I am arrogant, but I don't think anyone will notice a note of arrogance in any of my articles on this subject of dying. He thinks that I have misrepresented Epicurus, whereas I really only brought to light the superficiality of the Epicurean, "Death does no concern us". How can you treat the subject of death seriously if it does not concern you?

Obviously it does not concern Mr. McCall very much at present, that is why he tries to ridicule my article, but the truth will out in the end.

I see Mr. McCall did not mention Spinoza in his latest letter. Perhaps he thought that he was on much safer ground with Epicurus, but it seems he has put his foot in it here as well.

R. SMITH

In spite of your rationalised, reasonable and reasoned reply to Mr. Smith; I still beg to take issue with you on this matter, as I had the honour so to do with your predecessor, Chapman Cohen.

As a Secularist, I do not fear death on account of the after-results; but I maintain that as a human being of animal ancestry, and a possessor of infinitesimally derived and inherited instincts, I am entitled to the fear of death's physical approaches; its agonies and indignities; and further to maintain, as a Freethinker, this

great argument against the conception of Love as a universal factor. I am so much more surprised, that so many Freethinkers, even Cohen, treat this fact and argument, so lightly.

ARTHUR E. CARPENTER

[Colin McCall writes: "I have never suggested that death should be treated lightly, only rationally. There is no instinctive fear of death: neither animals nor children display any awareness of dying."]

WELSH EXAMPLE

The recent excellent articles in *THE FREETHINKER* on the subject of what is to be done with church buildings which have outlived their alleged usefulness prompts me to report on what is, apparently, the Welsh solution. In a recent *Radio Newsreel* programme (Light 18/3/65) the subject was the Lord's Day Observance Bill and an account was being given of the way in which the Sabbath was observed (or unobserved) in various parts of the country. The Welsh, who could always be relied upon (said the BBC newsmen) to sing hymns in packed chapels at the drop of a hat were now seeking more sophisticated ways of spending their leisure-time and "many hundreds" of chapels had closed in the last few years. The extent to which they go unmourned is illustrated by the way in which the buildings have been used—offices, shops, supermarkets, bingo halls, and (horror of horrors!) even strip clubs!

Welsh chapels are not renowned for their architectural beauty. But neither are many of England's churches. Near my flat here in Stockport stands colossal, black, sombre St. George's, producing nothing more than noise from its bells and gloom from its exterior. I wonder whether an enlightened Welshman might be able to suggest a use for it?

R. J. CALDWELL

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Secular Society was held at 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1, on Wednesday, March 10th. Present Mr. D. H. Tribe who was in the chair, Mr. W. Griffiths (Treasurer), Messrs. Barker, Collins, Condon, Ebury, Kuebart, Leslie, Millar, Miller, Sproule, and Timmins, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. McIlroy, Mrs. Venton, and the Secretary (Mr. W. McIlroy). Apologies were received from Messrs. W. Shannon and F. Warner. New members were admitted to Birmingham, Kingston and Parent branches. The Society's submission to the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) under the chairmanship of Lady Plowden was considered, and the hope expressed that it would be published in pamphlet form.

Arrangements for the Annual Conference (to be held in Birmingham on Whit Sunday) were discussed.

It was decided to make protests to the press and authorities concerned regarding a resolution passed by the Dover, Deal and District Divisional Executive for Education.

The next meeting was arranged for Wednesday, April 14th.

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Details of membership of the National Secular Society may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, S.E.1. Inquiries regarding Bequests and Secular Funeral Services should also be made to the General Secretary, NSS.

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The Freethinker

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THERE may still be people who think, or pretend to think, that no such person as Jesus of Nazareth ever existed. One hears them saying that the story of Jesus was invented to account for the emergence of a strange salvation myth, intended by those who invented it to bring hope to the oppressed masses living under the sway of imperial Rome. No doubt, there are in the New Testament mythical features, but the persons who figure in the story, Jesus and his disciples, are not mythical characters; they are historical persons. Jesus of Nazareth lived, and he died. He died on the cross.

This much, at least, is confirmed by two ancient historians, Josephus and Tacitus, both of whom record that Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judaea, condemned Jesus. Josephus explicitly mentions the mode of execution—crucifixion; Tacitus does not say in what manner the execution was carried out. However, neither the reason for the execution of Jesus nor the character of the penal proceedings which preceded it, is disclosed by either of the two historians, who, moreover, show a marked difference in their manner of referring to Jesus. Josephus, the Jew, speaks rather respectfully of him, calling him "a wise man", "a teacher of people".¹ By contrast, Tacitus, the aristocratic Roman, is full of scorn for one whom he considers to have been "the originator of a pernicious superstition", an agitator among barbarian orientals, and an enemy of the law and order introduced and upheld by Rome in a distant province. (He seems to connect the teachings of Jesus and the activities of Jesus's disciples after their master's death with the outbreak of the great Jewish revolt in the year 66.)

Place and Time of the Arrest

The four Gospels concordantly report where Jesus was arrested. Visitors to the Arab part of Jerusalem will be shown a grove on the Mount of Olives called "the Garden of the Agony". There, or somewhere not far from that place, Jesus was apprehended. He was then taken to the house of the Jewish high-priest, and from there, according to the Gospel of Luke, to the meeting place of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council, before being handed over for trial to Pilate. We do not know where the high-priest's house stood. The locality shown by Jerusalem cicerones as "The House of Caiaphas" is certainly not the spot; it is the ruin of a large building from Byzantine times. As for the location of the Sanhedrin's meeting place, we have conflicting reports; it seems, however, to have been situated on the Temple Mount, in the area known today as the Haram esh-Sherif. And the residence of Pilate, when the governor stayed in Jerusalem for official or for private reasons, was the Herodian Palace which was located in the south-western sector of the present-day walled city, near the Jaffa Gate.

We do not know the exact year of Jesus's death; nor do we know the day. All that is certain is that he was crucified while Pontius Pilate held office as Prefect of Judaea—that is, some time between 26 and 36 of the current era—and that his crucifixion took place shortly before or on the

feast of Passover. Since Jesus is popularly supposed to have been born in the year 1, since the Gospel of Luke reports that he was approximately 30 years old when he began to preach, and since the Gospel of John seems to lend some support to the assumption that his preaching activities lasted three years, the year of his death has widely been thought to be 33. But all the premises on which this calculation is based are wrong. In recent times,

the year 30 has been suggested by an increasing number of scholars, notably continental Roman Catholic scholars, but I believe that we have to go still further back, to 29 or even 28.

Three arguments favour this earlier dating. First of all, a 2nd-century tradition,

preserved by Clement of Alexandria, states that Jesus died forty-two years before the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus—that is, in 28. Secondly, Josephus places the crucifixion among those events which occurred close to the beginning of Pilate's governorship. The third reason, and in my opinion the decisive one, for dating the crucifixion before the year 30, lies in the chronology of the Apostle Paul's missionary travels. Fourteen years after his conversion, Paul attended what is traditionally called the "Council of Jerusalem", a meeting of the elders of the Church which is believed to have taken place during the reign of Agrippa I. If this Council met as late as the year of Agrippa's death, 44, Paul's conversion would fall somewhere around the year 30. Paul was not one of the original disciples of Jesus, but on the contrary an opponent of the messianist sect whose members he is said to have persecuted in the beginning. Hence, we must assume that some time elapsed between the death of Jesus and Paul's conversion. How long this time was, we do not know. But it pushes the year of Jesus's crucifixion back before 30.

We do not know the exact day. The fact that all four Gospels place the trial either on the eve of Passover or on the day of the actual festival, makes it virtually a certainty that Jesus was arrested and tried around that time, but it might well have been a few days earlier or later. The information provided by the Gospels is interpretative rather than factual. We have to probe what it was that motivated the evangelists' interpretation. It would appear that one group of his followers drew a comparison between the death of Jesus and the slaying of the paschal lamb, and therefore had the moment of the crucifixion coincide with that event. This tradition, mentioned already by the Apostle Paul, was preserved by John, who dates the crucifixion on the fourteenth of Nisan. Another early group of Christians connected the festive Passover meal, the *seder*, with the establishment of the New Covenant, the institution of the Eucharist, and to allow Jesus to partake of the *seder*, his crucifixion had to be dated after it. This tradition influenced the Marcan dating, placing the crucifixion on the fifteenth of Nisan. Since both datings are inspired by religious motivation, there is little to choose between them from the historian's point of view. All we can say for sure is that the trial and subsequent crucifixion

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Trial of Jesus

By PAUL WINTER

fell on a day close to the Passover.

Arrested by Whom?

All four Gospels report that Jesus was arrested at night. According to Mark, Matthew, and Luke, his arrest was carried out by a team, some men being armed with swords, others with staves or cudgels. According to John, the arrest was carried out by a detachment of soldiers under the command of a Roman officer, and accompanied by Jewish policemen. At first sight, these reports conflict with each other, but the conflict is resolved if we remember that Roman soldiers carried swords, while the Jewish police carried batons. Thus the men who are mentioned in Mark as having been armed with staves are Jewish policemen, while those members of the crowd whom Mark describes as carrying swords are identical with the detachment that is specified as a cohort of soldiers by John.

Mark, we must remember, was written in Rome, at a time when Christians were exposed to attack by the Roman mob, and were subject to suspicion on the part of Roman officials. Therefore, the evangelist may well have had cogent reasons for not wishing to draw attention to the fact that Jesus had been arrested by Roman soldiers or mercenaries in the service of Rome; and this may have made him substitute the vague and colourless expression "a crowd with swords" for the more definite designation of his source—a source which still comes to the fore in the Johannine account. Jesus was arrested by Roman soldiers who were accompanied, probably as guides, by some Jewish policemen.

The Reason for the Arrest

None of the evangelists tells us in plain language the reason for the arrest. But Mark, Matthew, and Luke reproduce the gist of a conversation which Jesus is reported to have held with the people who came to arrest him: "You have come," Jesus complains, "with swords and batons to arrest me as a rebel. I stayed with you in the daytime [or daily] on the Temple Hill and I taught. You did not arrest me then."² The Greek word which the synoptic evangelists use (*leisteis*) can be and usually is translated "robber" as well as "rebel". In the first century, however, this term was not exclusively used of bandits, but was applied to persons who in any of the Roman provinces resorted to armed resistance against Roman rule. In Roman eyes such people were bandits, robbers; in the people's estimate of themselves, they were patriots, perhaps guerrillas, partisans, freedom fighters. When Jesus, on the Mount of Olives, said to those who were taking him into custody, "You come with swords and batons to arrest me as a rebel. Was I not with you, teaching openly in the light of day?", he was defending himself by asserting his peaceful aims as a teacher. In Pilate's court, the charge was the same as that for which he had been arrested: he was accused of being "King of the Jews". And the cause for which he was sentenced to crucifixion was again the same, as the inscription on the cross confirms. Jesus was arrested by Roman troops as a Jewish rebel.

Examination and Trial

After his arrest, Jesus was brought to the house of the Jewish high-priest. All four Gospels agree on this. But why was he not immediately taken to the Jewish law court? Because it was night, and the court was closed. Then why was he not immediately taken to the Roman prison? Because a preliminary investigation was required for which the Romans used local officials, Jews, who, by reason of their knowledge of the local conditions and language, were better equipped to carry out any necessary inquiries. Up to the moment when Jesus arrived in the house of the high-priest, the four reports of the Gospels are more or less in agreement; from that moment on, they

differ profoundly in their accounts of the proceedings. According to John, Jesus was led to Annas, who interrogated him privately. There is no accusation, no witnesses are heard, no court assembles. It is a private conversation, or at the most a preliminary hearing. In the morning Jesus is sent, via Caiaphas, to the procurator Pontius Pilate. Thus, in John's account, no Jewish law court deals with the case. Yet at the very time at which John presents Jesus as conversing with Annas, Mark and Matthew arrange for him to be tried in a plenary session by the whole Sanhedrin. Mark does not mention the name of the presiding high-priest; Matthew gives his name as Caiaphas. The Sanhedrin meets at night in the high-priest's house—surprisingly, for this body, as the Parliament cum High Court of the Jewish nation, had a meeting place of its own, its proper Council Hall, and there exists no record besides the accounts of Mark and Matthew from which it might be guessed that it ever met in a high-priest's residence to hold its consultations; certainly not at night, and not on a feast day. Nevertheless, according to Mark and Matthew, Jesus is tried before an official session of the Council held in the high-priest's residence; witnesses are examined, their testimony is dismissed; Jesus is then closely interrogated by the presiding high-priest, convicted on his self-incriminatory reply—without corroboration—by all the assembled councillors, and sentenced to death for the crime of blasphemy.

Luke has nothing of that. No session of the Sanhedrin takes place at night. Jesus spends the rest of the night in the custody of the guards who had arrested him.

Early in the morning the Sanhedrin convenes—for the second time, according to Mark and Matthew; for the first time, according to Luke; John reports no session. From the Lucan wording it can be concluded that the morning session of the Sanhedrin was held in a locality other than the place where Jesus had been detained during the night. At their morning session the Jewish councillors decide to conduct Jesus to Pilate, to be tried by the Roman authority.

Disagreement of the Gospels

Here we are faced with a problem. If Jesus, as Mark and Matthew have it, was sentenced during an earlier session by the Sanhedrin, we would expect to find a reference to the verdict in the report of the Sanhedrin's second meeting. No word of it. As if they have forgotten that they themselves had sentenced Jesus for the crime of blasphemy, the Jewish magistrates hand Jesus over to Pilate for trial, on another charge—the charge, it turns out, on which he had been arrested in the first place! Pilate is not asked to confirm a sentence for blasphemy; he is not even told that Jesus has been tried and found guilty of such an offence; and he acts throughout as a magistrate who is presiding over the first stage of judicial proceedings, not as one who has been called to confirm a sentence passed by some other court of law. He hears the accusation, listens to the witnesses' depositions and demands to know whether Jesus had claimed to be the king of the Jews. The reply of Jesus, "You have said it", may be taken as an affirmation, though there are scholars who dispute this. In any case, it is not a direct reply.

All four Gospels agree that Jesus appeared before Pilate in the early morning. It must have been at a very early hour indeed, if the Marcan statement that Jesus was crucified at 9 a.m.³ is correct. For even if we leave out the amplification of the trial scenes in Luke and John, Mark himself places quite a few events between the examination of Jesus by Pilate and the execution: a protracted parley with the accusers, Pilate's indecision, the Barabbas episode,

(Continued on page 127)

The Vatican's Wealth

CENSORSHIP, the Vatican's wealth, and political jealousy are—according to the *Catholic Herald* (2/4/65)—the chief ingredients in the “boiling pot” in the current controversy involving the Holy See and Italy. But the row is mainly concerned with the Vatican's rights “as stipulated in its Concordat with the Italian government.” The *Herald* does not, significantly mention that “the Italian government” which signed the Concordat was that of Mussolini. The paper acknowledges, however, that many people are beginning to ask: “How powerful is the Catholic Church?”

In fact, deputies of the extreme Left Wing Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP), formed by break-away members of the Socialist Party have introduced a motion in Parliament calling for a complete revision of the Concordat between the Vatican and the government.

This move which came after the banning of Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Representative* in Rome, has, the *Herald* says, been denounced as an attempt to cause friction in the coalition government, comprising Socialists, Christian Democrats and Republicans. And the paper indicates that the banning of the play, which attacks the late Pope Pius XII for not speaking out against Nazi persecution of the Jews, was justified under the Lateran Treaties of 1929—signed by Fascist Italy and the Vatican.

A statement in the Senate by the Socialist Party Whip, Signor Giusto Tolley, saying there was “no question, on the plane of political action, of a revision of the Concordat” may, however, have helped to cool this particular controversy for the time being.

The other “big sore point”, the *Catholic Herald* continues, has been the position of the Vatican in regard to taxes due—or not due—to the Italian state.

Under the Lateran Treaties, which recognised the Vatican's sovereignty, Italy acknowledged that the Holy See did not have to pay taxes to Italy.

In 1962, however, the Italian Parliament passed a law taxing profits made in stock transactions. This law imposed a 15 per cent withholding tax on share dividends which was later raised to 30 per cent. An amendment by the Christian Democrats which would have exempted Vatican shares from tax was opposed by the then Finance Minister, Signor Giuseppe Trabucchi, a Christian Democrat himself, and was dropped.

“A series of diplomatic exchanges between the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Cicognani, and the Italian government followed, and in the end the matter was quietly settled. Signor Mario Martinelli, the new Finance Minister in the all-Christian Democrat stop-gap Cabinet in 1963, sent a confidential circular to the Italian companies in which the Vatican held shares authorising them to pay dividends free of tax to the Vatican.” This circular has, the *Herald* admits, been a source of friction since the Socialists rejoined the coalition government—which is hardly surprising.

And now the whole subject has exploded in the row over the Lateran Treaties which the PSIUP is trying to have revised. Also contributing to the flare-up is the fact that another Bill has been proposed which seeks to ensure that the Holy See is not only exempt from taxation on dividends, but that it should be given a refund of certain taxes claimed in the past.

The Leftist Rome weekly, *l'Espresso*, recently claimed that this agreement would cost the Italian fiscal system about £23 million, but this figure has, the *Herald* says, been generally ridiculed.

Speculation has however been “rife once again” on the

extent of the Vatican's riches, and as to how big a shareholder it is on the Italian Stock Exchange.

There is no doubt that the money paid by the Italians to the Vatican under the Lateran Treaties, in compensation for its finally abandoning its rights over the Papal States, has been “wisely and rewardingly invested”. The payments in Italian banknotes and government bonds, were to a nominal value of about £19 million at that time.

Pope Pius XI set up a special body to invest this money throughout the world, and the capital's increase is “believed to have been spectacular”.

The Vatican is also a very large shareholder in Italy. Estimates of its exact holdings have been many and varied, but the *Catholic Herald* gives a “conservative one” that the Holy See controls between 7 and 10 per cent of the Italian economy. Among its interests in Italy are believed to be banks, a spaghetti factory, the Italian airlines, a big property company, public utility firms, and a film company.

Prince Giulio Pacelli, a nephew of the late Pius XII, is a director of the Banco di Roma, one of Italy's three “banks of national interest”, and of the Societa Italiana per il Gas, a public utility company. His brother, Prince Marcantonio, is chairman of the board of directors of the Pantanella Spaghetti Factory and a director of the Societa Generale Immobiliare, one of Italy's leading property companies.

Both these men hold several honorary posts in the Vatican, and their brother, Prince Carlo Pacelli, is Councillor-General of the Vatican City State.

Prince Marcantonio was also president of the LAI airlines, which merged in the 1950s with the Italian airlines Alitalia.

“Widely mentioned”, too, as Vatican-controlled is the Banco di Santo Spirito, set up in 1605 by Pope Paul V and transformed into a limited company in 1923. The president of the bank is Marquis Giovanni Battista Sacchetti, Quartermaster-General of the Apostolic Palaces. Also controlled by the Holy See is a Rome film company, San Paolo Film, which has been making religious films since the 1930s, mostly for children.

Outside Italy, the Vatican's investments represent about 90 per cent of its total holdings. These are generally channelled through Fribourg in Switzerland, and through New York under the sponsorship of Cardinal Spellman.

An article in the *Economist* (27/3/65) described the Vatican—“or rather the Pope, for his rule is absolute”—as far and away the world's biggest shareholder, with a portfolio of quoted securities totalling more than £2,000 million.

The Holy See is a particularly big landlord in the Rome area, said the *Economist*. “It owns whole blocks of houses and hundreds of flats, as well as big stretches of land on the outskirts of the city.” And these have been “highly valuable” in the building boom of recent years. The Vatican continues to build new blocks of flats and to let flats to its officials.

It also pointed out that this estimate takes no account of the Vatican's additional wealth, from land and real estate all over the world to the world's most valuable art collection.

TV NOTE

DAVID TRIBE, President of the National Secular Society will be appearing with Dr. Donald Soper in the independent television programme *The Sunday Break* on April 25th.

This Believing World

THE SUCCESS of most pop singers is notoriously short lived. They receive the acclamations of their followers for only a few years at most, and we note that one of them, Terry Dene—who was at one time earning £500 a week—suffered a nervous breakdown (*The People*, 28/3/65) and shortly afterwards discovered religion. He has given up smoking and drinking, and is now a “full time unpaid evangelist”.

★

WHETHER he will be able to put over Jesus as well as he used to put over his pop songs remains to be seen. It was a member of the Mobile Evangelistic Crusade who met Terry, and asked him to accept Jesus as his saviour. Terry is now reputedly happier than he ever has been in his life, which just shows that even a pop singer can alter his life for Jesus's sake. In fact, as the *People* proclaims, “Pop Singer Terry has seen the Light”.

★

ACCORDING TO the Rev. Dr. John MacDonald, it is not necessary to have “spiritual” healers with their holy hands moved either by spirit doctors or by Jesus Christ, to be cured of incurable illnesses. The divine work can all, or nearly all, be done by “thoughts”, he tells us (*Sunday Express*, 21/3/65). “We project our blessing by thought—some would call it prayer—to sick people who cannot be helped by the medical profession”. It is all done “by the power of the mind, to make prayer more efficient, and combine this with faith in God”, Dr. MacDonald says. But naturally, if a patient died it would not be because of failure of the infallible treatment but because of the obvious lack of faith in God.

★

THE *Daily Mail's* theologian, Miss Monica Furlong, has now written a book, *With Love to the Church*, and excerpts have been appearing in that journal. We are by no means sure what is actually meant by some of the extracts, but she is quite certain a lot of the “unhappy difficulties” shouldered by Christians “lies at the moment” in their “relations to the secular world”. This is no doubt quite true, for the “secular world” finds it very difficult to reconcile the religious beliefs of Christians—miracles, virgin births, angels, devils, salvation, to say nothing of such wonderful events as the resurrection and the ascension of the Son of God—with modern knowledge and experience. The “secular world” treats them as primitive stories. Perhaps even Miss Furlong does herself.

★

BUT a letter to hearten the Christians appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* (29/3/65) from Hubert S. Box, Proctor in the Convocation of Canterbury, telling us that the Church has “consistently held” and taught among other things “that the incarnation was a personal intervention of the Creator . . . that Christ's virgin birth and bodily resurrection are as much facts of history as any other historical event”. And Mr. Box ought to know for he wasn't there.

★

CASSANDRA of the *Daily Mirror* (29/3/65), appears to be almost as contemptuous of the Roman Church as any blatant Freethinker. He has discovered that it “is the world's greatest business and financial structure”, and also “the most secretive”. The Pope with his advisers “is the most powerful financier on earth”—and so on. In fact, all the papers seem suddenly to have discovered what Freethinkers have been pointing out for years. There was even a report in the *Catholic Herald*, as we note on the previous page.



F. A. HORNIBROOK

Peter Cotes writes:—

Fred Hornibrook was a great original. A simple man who followed truth, sought out honesty, and symbolised integrity, Fred knew that love of people which comes from understanding simple feelings and sharing common likes and dislikes. In all the time I knew him, I don't think I can honestly remember him uttering one mean or spiteful word, or doing one unkind or even thoughtless action. He knew the mighty and the lowly—to him the mighty were occasionally less mighty, and the low were always less low. He disliked humbug, snobbery, and all forms of injustice, but his hates were never directed against people, only against things—injustice, bigotry, reaction and war. He enjoyed simplicity, and was the simplest of men; loving sport, companionship, and nature, friendship, walking, talking, and, for many years, cycling. With his passing everyone who crossed his path will feel a sense of personal loss. He was so alive in life, that death can never claim him wholly. He has left us a legacy, and those of us who knew him are enriched by the reward of having crossed his path.

A wide reader, with an amazing memory (he related once how he learned the three books of Euclid by heart as a boy) he had the warmest nature of any man alive. His wide and varied circle of friends and acquaintances will testify to his skill, kindness, and lovable personality. But what marked him out from the crowd—aside from that magnificent constitution and splendid physique, which enabled him to continue practising up until a month ago—was his amazing generosity in giving himself. No man ever thought less of money-making, or of doing things for material reward. He wanted people to enjoy life, and by spreading the gospel of good health, he was, more often than not, successful with all those who went to him for help.

I have heard him described as, “the richest, the poorest, and the happiest man alive”, and it is true to say that he was rich in experience and enjoyment of life, even though he might not have been blessed with great material possessions. Constantly cheerful (even during his last illness, which he doggedly fought with that wonderful physical resistance so much a testimony to his own teachings) his zest, enthusiasm, honesty of purpose, and gift of friendship were the most exhilarating things about him. Fred Hornibrook was indeed a man amongst men: impossible to replace, or to forget. To his dear wife, that kindred spirit, his fellow-worker, Nina, goes forth our love and sympathy at this time.

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Terms for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, April 18th, 6.45 p.m.: A. ALTOFT, "The Menace of Industrialised Farming".

Haverling Humanist Society (Harold Wood Social Centre), Tuesday, April 20th, 8 p.m.: DAVID TRIBE and a Roman Catholic priest debate "Co-existence".

The 59 Society (Kensington Public Library, Hornton Street, W.8), Thursday, April 22nd, 8 p.m.: DAVID TRIBE and FATHER T. CORBISHLEY, SJ, Debate, "There is no evidence for God".

Surbiton and Malden & Coombe and Kingston Branches NSS (The White Hart, Kingston Bridge, Hampton Wick), Friday, April 16th, 8 p.m.: A meeting.

Notes and News

WE feature this week—appropriately for Good Friday—the first part of a long article on "The Trial of Jesus" by Paul Winter, author of the book, *On the Trial of Jesus*, published by B. Blackwell & Co., Oxford (40s.). Not all our readers are likely to agree with Mr. Winter's interpretation of the events alleged to have taken place in Jerusalem some nineteen centuries ago, but none can deny his erudition and clarity of argument. "The Trial of Jesus" first appeared in the American Jewish magazine *Commentary* in September 1964 and is printed by kind permission of the Editor and of Mr. Winter. The article deserves the consideration of Freethinkers as a natural and rational treatment of its difficult subject matter.

THE office of Cardinal Koenig, Archbishop of Vienna, had—we read in the *Catholic Herald* (2/4/65)—"refused to comment on reports that he is to head a new Vatican secretariat or agency for atheists and agnostics". But a Vatican spokesman announced that Pope Paul has decided to set up the new secretariat "to study why some people deny or doubt the existence of God, and to set about trying to establish a 'dialogue' with them." The establishment of such a secretariat would in no way affect the Church's condemnation of atheism but it would "reflect the Pope's concern with reaching the atheist and understanding him". Which is touching indeed.

CARDINAL KOENIG has, as the *Catholic Herald* noted, been an envoy of Pope Paul and Pope John XXIII in negotiations with the Communist regimes in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. He has to our knowledge instituted a "dialogue" magic word!) with Austrian Communists. And with the terms "atheist" and "Communist" being largely interchangeable in Catholic eyes, the Cardinal was obviously the natural choice to head the new body. On April 8th, it was duly announced that he had been appointed President of the Secretariat for Non-believers.

★

MEANWHILE ecumenical "dialogue" is not proving altogether satisfactory—at least to the Protestants. "The trouble with most of ecumenism that we have seen to date is that it is one-way only," said *Church and State* (March 1965). And it gave several examples of the "steady infiltration" of American Protestant organisations by Catholic clergy, "without any analogous opening from the other side." This offered some basis for the "incredible suspicion that Catholic leadership penetrates Protestantism under the banner of ecumenism while rigidly keeping its own groups behind the walls of Catholic exclusiveness". But why "incredible"? *Church and State* should be the last to be surprised at such typical Roman Catholic tactics.

★

IT is often difficult "to determine where religion ends and disease begins", Dr. Leon Salzman told the Academy of Religion and Mental Health at its annual meeting in Washington (*Time*, 2/4/65). And, as Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at Georgetown (Roman Catholic) University medical school, Dr. Salzman should know. Jesuit philosopher and critic William F. Lynch added that neurotic religion frequently shows up among Roman Catholics as a denial of human feelings, a desire to find the will of God in every decision, and an unhealthy dependence on dogma as a means of obtaining absolute certainty. More evidence that "legalistically structured" religion can produce neurosis came, *Time* reported, from Dr. Klaus Thomas, founder of Berlin's Suicide Prevention Centre. About 40 per cent of 3,000 suicide-prone patients at the Centre suffered from "ecclesiogenic neurosis" arising from guilt feelings, especially about sex, induced by their religious training.

★

ROBERT J. McALLISTER, a consultant psychiatrist, reported to the Academy that of 100 hospitalised Catholic priests at the Seton Institute, 77 had serious emotional problems as seminarians and 32 ultimately became alcoholics. A conflict between their desire for perfection and their basic needs and desires can drive men to leave the priesthood entirely, he said. "Suddenly their own humanity breaks through and they are gone."

★

THE British and Foreign Bible Society is preparing to "flood the world with Christian books", its General Secretary, Dr. N. J. Cockburn said in St. Paul's Cathedral on April 4th at the end of the "Feed the Minds" week. Life in a highly industrialised and scientifically-orientated world required, said Dr. Cockburn, a new kind of Christian literature combining "the treasures of the past and the need for a contemporary approach". Practical books were called for, "both technical and scientific" which explained "to members of both agricultural and industrial communities how to live the Christian life in today's conditions".

★

OUR contributor, Oswell Blakeston is at present exhibiting 3D and Seal paintings in the foyer of the Everyman Cinema, Hampstead, London, N.W.3. The exhibition will remain open until May 2nd.

Philosophy of Science—Some Facets

4—CHOOSING THE SIMPLEST THEORY

By DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

SUPPOSE that a physicist is investigating the relationships between the pressure and volume of a gas. For each value of the gas pressure he obtains a corresponding value for the volume. Plotting these values on a graph he discovers that a simple curve, defined by a simple mathematical equation, almost—but not quite—passes through all the plotted points. Nevertheless the physicist accepts the mathematical formula as the law of the gas and is content to assume that the points do not quite fit because his measurements of volume and pressure were not quite exact.

Why does the physicist draw this simple line and not a more "wavy" one passing exactly through all the points? Indeed, why go beyond the evidence at all; why not leave the results as a set of unconnected points?

The act of drawing the simple curve is habitual and intuitive; also, experience of similar cases has taught the experimenter that further checks will result in more points close to the curve. The curve, in fact, is a set of predictions for the results of future experiments.

All this is an example of a well established rule that if several theories equally well explain a set of facts, the simplest should be chosen.

It is not always clear, unfortunately, what constitutes simplicity. One definition is given in the famous Occam's Razor; "Entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily". In other words, if a set of facts can be explained by either of two theories, one of which contains three independent concepts and the other only two, then the latter should be chosen.

Recently however doubts have been expressed as to whether simplicity can be judged only on the number of concepts. It has been suggested that the relationships between concepts should also be taken into account. Thus, if a theory based on a few concepts explains certain facts only by setting up a complex array of relationships between the concepts, it may be justifiable to choose another theory with more concepts but simpler relationships.

In metaphysics, as in science, choice of theory may not be just a matter of counting concepts. Monists, both materialist and idealist varieties, have sheltered safely behind Occam's Razor. But now, if structure is to be taken into account, it may become valid to introduce other classes of entities into our philosophy—perhaps aesthetic and moral values that are independent of matter.

Is the Soul Immortal?

By TOM PRICE

IMMORTALITY is the hope of man. Those who have lived and built and bred children reason thus: "Surely death is not the end?"

"It would be so wasteful, so unjust, so prosaic. There must be life beyond the grave."

They fancy that their continued existence is of such great account in the "pattern" of the universe that immortality is nothing less than a right—or a privilege to be prayed for.

For them, any suggestion that the grave is the end of body and personality and ego is insufferable.

"Why," they say, "I'm so terrifically important that there is no question of not being immortal. Other things,

like flowers, snakes, ants and budgerigars, may very well die and rot and be forgotten, but I'm MAN—I think!"

And because they are sincerely convinced that immortality is an indisputable fact, it is not very hard for them to invent something to explain it in everyday terms.

This invention they call the soul.

And as it is obvious to all that the body, which is conceived in an egg, which grows to full virility, and then fades and dies, is not the vehicle of immortality, it follows that the soul is our only hope.

First, there has to be a soul. Second, that soul has to be immortal.

What is the soul? Is it personality? Personality can be changed by the stroke of the surgeon's knife.

Is it the "breath of life", the vital spark? Then it can be killed by a bullet.

No, there is no practical way of defining the soul, it is an immaterial thing that no one has ever felt, heard or seen.

It has a fascinating history, having been a principal part of the dogmas of primitive religions long before Christianity—illustrating the painful desire of suffering mankind to assure themselves that they will live for ever.

The evidence for existence of soul is flimsy enough; in the main, the rationalisation of man's intense desire to avoid the pain and oblivion of death.

But the evidence for immortality of the soul is flimsier.

This evidence is mostly to be found in the writings of the great religions. These highly emotional writings must be suspected by anyone wishing to approach matters in a calm, scientific way. In any case, they give no proof of the problem, merely making the statement that the soul exists, and is immortal.

Few can blame modern scientists for not being very interested in the subject.

In fact, in these days even the clergymen are not too sure of their ground and would rather discuss South African politics and the standards of the welfare state than that old-fashioned and rather phantasmagoric phantasm, the soul. Which, perhaps, is a healthy sign.

What God can do to an Eel

"EELS spawn in the Sargasso Sea," the priest said, "and then the Gulf Stream sweeps their spawn in great balls a mile wide and half a mile deep, and the whole lot get washed up the Severn by the Bore. There's a good deal of force in the Bore, you know; and sometimes you can hear the roar of the waters five miles away. They catch the baby eels in nets, and they're no bigger than threads with black eyes; but they're delicious fried alive in bacon fat. I'd say they're superior to whitebait."

"Now people will tell you that you can't keep a captured elver. The baby eel, they say, will always die if you try to rear him. But my father was a man of God and he said, 'These elvers will live'. He put them in a white enamel bowl in the sun. After a few days they'd tied themselves into knots."

"God did that to them?" I asked pointedly.

He shook his head sadly. "It's clear you've never been in the Polar Regions; but you must have heard of the effect on explorers of white light reflected from the snow? Well, our elvers had gone insane from the white light reflected from the enamel bowl. We only rescued one. But father prayed over him and kept him on the mantelpiece in a jar. He'd knock on the glass when he wanted to be fed a worm. You see how really wonderful God's ways are?"

OSWELL BLAKESTON

The Trial of Jesus

(Continued from page 122)

the clamour of the mob, the death sentence, the scourging and the mockery of Jesus, the journey to the place of execution outside Jerusalem. Such early preparedness on the governor's part to sit in judgment would have been impossible unless Pilate had prior knowledge that his presence was required in the court. The early hour tends to confirm the reliability of the Johannine report concerning the arrest of Jesus by military personnel under the command of a Roman officer.

The Judge

The evangelists—all four of them—describe Pilate as convinced of Jesus's innocence and anxious to acquit him. But instead of using his supreme authority as the highest judge and governor of the province, and simply passing a verdict of acquittal, Pilate offers to let Jesus go as an act of grace. The Gospels refer to a habit of Pilate, or a Jewish custom, of releasing a prisoner on the Passover; in accordance with this, Pilate asks the Jews whether he should release Jesus or another prisoner called Barabbas. Here the evangelists actually contradict themselves. On the one hand, they say that the Jewish citizens of Jerusalem were free to demand the release of *any one* prisoner; on the other hand, they report that Pilate limited the people's choice by offering them only the alternative of freeing Jesus or Barabbas. We read later on in the Gospels that Jesus was not crucified alone, but together with two other men. Hence when Jesus stood before Pilate there must have been at least two more accused or condemned men in the governor's custody. If the Jews of Jerusalem were free to demand the release of any prisoner, why should Pilate have limited them to Jesus or Barabbas? In actual fact no custom of releasing a prisoner at the Passover season ever existed, either in Jewish or in Roman law. Barabbas, however, seems to have been a historical person, though "Barabbas" is only part of his name. There exist Gospel codices which give the name in full as *Jesus bar Abba*. If two persons, both called Jesus, had been arrested instead of one, the Roman magistrate might have asked which of the two was to be tried. In that case, endeavouring to present Pilate as being favourably disposed towards Jesus, the writer of the Gospel might have fashioned the Barabbas episode as we now have it in his book, making it appear that the governor was not asking about the identity of the accused, but rather offering one of the two for pardon: "Which one of the two shall I release, Jesus who is called Bar Abba or Jesus who is called Messiah?" Yet Pilate had no need to resort to a presumed paschal custom of granting amnesty; nor did he have any reason to leave the decision to the crowd. He was the judge. If he found Jesus to be guiltless, and the stubborn Jews insisted that Barabbas should be granted a pardon, all Pilate had to do was pronounce Jesus innocent and release him along with Barabbas. Nobody in Jerusalem—no high-priest nor any other Jew—could have prevented the imperial governor from setting Jesus free, if Pontius Pilate had been inclined to do so.

The evangelists, however, report that Pilate's kindly gesture to set Jesus free by an act of grace proved of no avail. The Jews prefer Barabbas. He is released, and the proceedings of the court come to an end.

If we wish to understand what lies behind this version of the story, we have to remind ourselves once again that Mark—the oldest Gospel, though the second in the Canon—was written in Rome at a time (around the year 70 of

the current era) when the small community of Christians living there was in constant danger of persecution. Already in the 40's, Christian missionary preaching had provoked the Emperor Claudius to expel all Jews from the capital city, those who believed that the Messiah had appeared and those who did not share such a belief (the Romans were as yet unable to distinguish between messianist Jews—that is, Christians—and other Jews), and in Nero's reign the persecution of the Christians took an even grimmer form. Since Mark was composed either at the end of Nero's reign or shortly afterwards, the evangelist had every reason to try to ingratiate himself and his co-religionists with the Romans. The fact that Jesus had been sentenced to the cross by Pilate—a death penalty which carried opprobrium in Roman eyes, as being reserved for the most heinous crimes, and for slaves and despised foreigners—could not be concealed. But the evangelist could portray Pilate as having been unwilling to pass a death sentence and as having recognised the innocence of the man whom Christians now worshipped. For this purpose Pilate had to be presented as acting under Jewish pressure against his own better conviction. The evangelist's tendency was not "anti-Semitic", as some might say; it was defensive and apologetic. He was concerned with promoting the fortunes of his little group, and was anxious to avoid suspicion and counter hostility on the part of the authorities. Accordingly, he presented the Roman authority of Jesus's own day, Pontius Pilate, as professing that he had found "no fault in this man". The writer of the Second Gospel and those who came after him never realised what results this shift in the responsibility for Jesus's crucifixion would have in future generations.

The Sentence

In this connection, it is instructive to look at how the various evangelists refer to the governor's final decision. Not one of them is prepared to state plainly that a sentence of death was passed on Jesus by the Roman magistrate. In Mark and Matthew we read that "Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified"—an oblique manner of reporting a judicial verdict. Luke and John are even more reticent. The former states that Pilate gave in to the demand of the Jews and allowed Jesus to be crucified, while the latter goes so far as to say that Pilate relinquished Jesus to the Jews who themselves took him away and crucified him. All the evangelists are at pains to avoid putting on record the passing of a death sentence by the Roman magistrate—but it remains a fact that crucifixion was a Roman punishment, not a Jewish one.

Jesus is crucified, according to Mark at nine o'clock in the morning, according to John in the later afternoon. Together with him two other prisoners are executed by crucifixion, of whose trial and sentencing the New Testament gives no information. But there is one small, perhaps significant, detail: the two men are designated as *leleistai*, rebels—the same appellation which is applied to Jesus in the synoptists' account of his arrest. On Pilate's order, an inscription is attached to the cross stating the reason, the *causa*, or *aitia*, for pronouncing the death sentence. This inscription reads: "King of the Jews". In the tangled web of evangelical accounts of Jesus's trial, one point stands out with clarity: he was arrested as "a rebel", accused before Pilate as "King of the Jews", found guilty as such, and executed as such. None of the later accretions which in the Gospels overlay the original primitive account, and

none of the editorial modifications from the hands of successive evangelists, can hide or disguise the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was arrested, accused, tried, sentenced, and executed on a charge of insurrection against Roman rule in Judaea.

Judaea under Roman Rule

Christian scholars, Catholic and Protestant, generally do not dispute this. But many of them, the great majority perhaps, will say that the political accusation was a "trumped-up charge", invented by the Jewish authorities of the day who had found Jesus "worthy of death" for religious reasons but could not act on their own authority, because while the Sanhedrin had the right to pass sentences of death, it had no right to carry out such sentences. This argument is faulty. At the time when Judaea was under procuratorial rule, from the year 6 to the year 66, Jewish law courts *did* pass death sentences upon Jewish inhabitants of Israel, and *did* carry out such sentences on their own authority, without referring the cases to the Roman political administrator of the country.

There is evidence for this in the New Testament itself. The Acts of the Apostles (a book which has as its subject the growth of Christianity in the first three decades or so after Jesus's death) mentions several cases in which the Sanhedrin either intended to exercise its power to pass and carry out capital sentences, or actually did so. For example, there is the description* of how Stephen, denounced for his preaching, was brought before the Jewish magistrates, led into the courthouse for his trial and, after being taken out again, was immediately carried off to his execution. He was executed in the Jewish manner, by stoning, in accordance with Jewish law as laid down in Deuteronomy.⁵

Certain exegetes explain away the execution of Stephen on the Sanhedrin's orders as an irregularity, an illegal act of lynching carried out by an excited mob. But these exegetes commit the error of concentrating primarily on the contents of the so-called "Speech of Stephen" to his judges⁶ instead of on the factual account of how Stephen was taken into the Sanhedrin's council hall and executed after he re-emerged. The author of the Acts of the Apostles was in a position to obtain factual information only concerning what happened before Stephen was taken to the courthouse and what happened after he left it. He had no minutes of the court proceedings, no information about what went on inside the council hall, and knew nothing of what Stephen might have said to his judges. The diatribe he attributes to Stephen is not a defence plea; it bears no connection with the case at all; and except for a few words at its ending it is not even "Christian" in content. It is a violent denunciation of the Temple ritual—and Jewish Christians took part in the Temple cult until the Temple was destroyed in the year 70—such as might possibly have originated among members of the pre-Christian Dead Sea Covenanters or a kindred Jewish group. The writer of the Acts could have found some transcript of a homily with an anti-cultic tenor, restyled and adapted it, and then used this material to amplify his meagre information and enliven the account of Stephen's trial.⁷

Once we recognise that what the Acts presents as Stephen's speech is in no way a transcript of the actual words Stephen said to his judges, we shall not fall into the error of contending that Stephen so enraged his audience by his speech that they seized him and carried him off to be stoned without awaiting the court's proper verdict. Stephen was not stoned by an excited mob. He was executed in pursuance of a legal sentence, legally passed by a court competent to try him.

Another reference to the Sanhedrin's power to pass and

carry out sentences of death is in Acts 5:27, 33, where it is reported that the Sanhedrin, when investigating the activities of some of Jesus's disciples, intended to sentence them to death and execute them. According to the Acts, the Jewish councillors were persuaded to abstain from carrying out this intention by Gamaliel's counsel of moderation.⁸

(To be concluded)

1. Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, XVIII 63, 64. Scholars are divided in their opinions on the authenticity of this passage. The text in our editions of the *Antiquities* certainly contains insertions which do not come from Josephus's own hand. The passage appears to have been tampered with by a Christian copyist, probably in the 3rd century. Nevertheless, there are good reasons for assuming that Josephus did relate the death of Jesus. When writing about James the Just (*Jewish Antiquities* XX 200), Josephus casually mentions that James was the brother of "Jesus who is called Christ". It thus seems that Josephus, before he referred to James, had already informed his readers about Jesus. Furthermore, the *testimonium* displays features which can scarcely be attributed to a Christian interpolator. Jesus is here called "a wise man", a designation not in keeping with 3rd-century Christian notions about who and what Jesus was. The immediately following words, "if it is permissible to call him a man", may have been added; they show that the copyist felt uneasy about an expression Josephus had used. The *testimonium* distinguishes between the roles which the Jews and which the Romans played in Jesus's trial. It refers to an indictment that was drawn up by Jewish nobles, yet states that the death sentence was passed by the Roman governor. It was not customary for Christians in the 3rd-century to make such fine distinctions; they flatly charged the Jews with responsibility for everything—arrest, trial, sentencing, and crucifixion. Ultimately, the adherents of Jesus are in the *testimonium* called "the tribe of Christians", a phrase not used of Christians by people who were Christians themselves, but credible in the mouth of a first-century Jew who was steeped in the Old Testament and would be accustomed to describing internal divisions within the body politic of the Jewish nation by the word "tribe".
2. Mark 14:48, 49; Matthew 26:25; Luke 22:52, 53.
3. Mark 15:25.
4. Acts 6:12-7:59.
5. Acts 7:58b; compare Deuteronomy 17:25-27.
6. Acts 7:2-53, 56.
7. Compare my remarks in the *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, Vol. 82, 1961, columns 790-792.
8. Acts 5:34-40.

CORRESPONDENCE

MARXISTS AND ASSASSINATION

Mr. F. A. Ridley, the master of subterfuge and confusion, accuses me in his article "The Ethics of Assassination" of confusion regarding the role of the individual in history. I repeat, the confusion is all on his side.

I noticed in his article he did not mention the brutal assassination of Leon Trotsky. One wonders why.

Perhaps he would like to create the impression that the Marxists' hands are clean regarding assassination.

It is certainly well known that for Marxists, by an incredible perversion of language, a crime can be "objectively" meritorious—meaning, within the context of the class-struggle, or more simply, if it is useful to the Party.

R. SMITH

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In chapters 23-26 of the Acts, we also have an account of a conflict of competence between the Jewish and the Roman authorities concerning the question as to whether the Apostle Paul—a Roman citizen!—ought to be tried by a Jewish or a Roman court. Acts 26: 10 puts the following declaration on the lips of Paul: "On the authority of the senior priests, I sent many of the saints [Christians] to prison. When they were put to death, I cast my vote against them." The relevant point when appraising the significance of this declaration, is not whether Paul actually uttered these words or not. Nor does it matter much whether the statement here ascribed to him is historically correct. Of significance is the fact that the author of the Acts, writing in the latter part of the first century, had Paul make this statement. If jurisdiction in capital cases was in Judaea reserved to the Roman governor, it would have been common knowledge among the readers of the Acts of the Apostles that Jewish criminal courts had no right to carry out capital sentences and that Paul the Apostle could not have taken part in proceedings of this sort. Yet, in the Acts, Paul makes the above quoted statement to the Roman governor's own face. Would the author of the Acts have deliberately invited contradiction by attributing a statement to Paul that his readers must have known to be incorrect?

Evidence of Jurisdiction

Even in later centuries, several Fathers of the Church preserved knowledge of the fact that in the time of Jesus Jewish law courts in Judaea exercised unlimited jurisdiction over Jews who were being tried for capital offences. Origen describes the condition of the Jewish judiciary after the year 70, and explains that it lost its capital jurisdiction as a result of the victory of Roman arms.⁹ In another passage, Origen mentions that Jewish law courts continued to administer the death penalty even after the year 70, but were now compelled to do so clandestinely in order not to risk a conflict with the Roman rulers whom they were defying.¹⁰

Origen wrote in the early 3rd century. Still later, Augustine of Hippo, when commenting on the passage of the Fourth Gospel which denies the Jewish leaders any right to carry out sentences of death,¹¹ offers the following explanation: "This is to be understood in the sense that the Jews could not carry out an execution because they were celebrating a festival."¹² Thus according to Augustine, the Jews of Jesus's time were not deprived of the right to put sentences of death into effect; they voluntarily refrained from exercising their legitimate right on a day that was a holy day. John Chrysostom of Antioch has the same explanation.¹³

Those who contend that the Sanhedrin lacked the power to administer the death sentence it is alleged to have passed on Jesus¹⁴ are therefore giving inadequate weight to the evidence which the New Testament itself provides. What is more, they fail to draw the logical conclusion from their argument when they maintain that the Sanhedrin

was authorised to pass a sentence of death, yet not authorised to carry out this sentence without endorsement from the Roman procurator. For if it were indeed the procurator's duty to confirm or set aside a death sentence passed by a Jewish court, he would have been required to review the case in terms of Jewish law—that law that had been applied by the inferior court which passed sentence. Unless the procurator were an expert in the procedures and substance of Jewish law, it would have been impossible for him to do this. The Romans, however, true to their maxim not to become embroiled in the religious affairs of subject or associate nations permitted the Sanhedrin jurisdiction in all cases, including capital ones, where Jewish religious law came into question.

But even supposing that Jewish authorities were prevented by constitutional limitations from putting into effect a death sentence which they had passed on religious grounds, they would still not have needed to invent a political charge of sedition. It is ridiculous to assert, as some quasi-scholars do, that Pontius Pilate would have taken no cognizance of an accusation on religious grounds, that he might have "shrugged his shoulders" if the representatives of the Sanhedrin had asked him to confirm a sentence passed for blasphemy. When Rome took over the political administration of Judaea (at the wish of the Jews themselves, who hoped to enjoy a greater measure of autonomy under Roman domination than they had done under the misgovernment of the Herodian dynasty), the Emperor recognised Rome's obligation to uphold the ancestral Jewish law and religion in the country. And Roman law provided the death penalty for religious offences. We know from Josephus that a Roman procurator sentenced a Roman soldier to death because that soldier had shown disrespect for a scroll of the Jewish Scriptures.¹⁵ In other words, the Jewish religion, to use a modern expression, was "the religion of the State" in Judaea, even in procuratorial times. Hence, supposing that the Sanhedrin was not in a position to put into effect its own judgment and therefore referred Jesus's case to Pilate, the Jewish councillors, if they were bent on destroying him, could simply have accused Jesus of a religious offence.

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Different Ideas of Jesus's Function

It may be argued—and not without justification—that the charge of sedition on which Jesus was tried and executed was made by his enemies, Jewish or Roman, and that it says nothing about his own aims or of the state of his own mind. Owing to their nature and their origin, the Gospels are unsuitable as documents that would allow access to the mind of Jesus. They contain a number of his authentic sayings; they give a general outline or a fleeting picture of what sort of man he was; but they provide us with no information of his aims in particular situations of his life such as his last visit to Jerusalem. (The Gospels do contain, however, traditions of undeniably Christian origin which assert a claim to kingship on behalf of Jesus. In two

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Trial of Jesus (2)

By PAUL WINTER

of the Gospels, for instance, we find the genealogies of Jesus, intended to trace back his descent to David¹⁶ and thus establish the legitimacy of his royal rights as David's heir. In one Gospel, we find the solemn announcement of Jesus's birth, made by an angel who promises Mary that Jesus will inherit his royal ancestor's throne and reign over the house of Jacob. In two of the Gospels, we find on Jesus's lips a declaration to his twelve disciples that they will sit on thrones and judge the tribes of Israel. In one of the Gospels we also read that Jesus's followers, after the shattering experience of their master's death, voiced their despair in the words, "We had hoped that it would be he who comes to redeem Israel."

Now the Gospels (all written two and three generations after the death of Jesus) reflect a great variety of traditions that developed in different surroundings and at different times. These traditions express divergent concepts of the character and function which various groups of people, all in some way attached to the memory of Jesus, assigned to him. The clearest indication of the differences in their outlook lies in the titular designations they gave to him. Sometimes he is called "teacher", sometimes "the Son of Man", sometimes "the Prophet", sometimes "the Son of David", sometimes "the Messiah (Christ)", sometimes "the Son of God"; he is also called by several other names. These titles are by no means synonymous. Each describes a distinct social status or a specific theological concept, pointing to a different role in the eschatological drama of history which the followers of Jesus expected to unfold.

Messiah and Christ

The title which in due course came to supplant all the others is, of course, *christos* ("Christ" in English) which is Greek for the Hebrew *mashiah*, meaning "The Anointed One". Anointing was in ancient Jewish custom the formal act of investing the holder of the highest office in the Jewish polity with authority over those under his command, the act by which his legitimate appointment to the leadership of the nation was made known to one and all. What coronation is in British constitutional law, anointing was in Jewish law. The Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ, was thus a title of honour, due to the highest functionary of the Jewish state. By the time of the Apostle Paul, however, the concept of messiahship, or rather christhood, had already advanced far beyond its primary connotation and towards the meaning which it now holds for Christians, denoting to them a Being of supra-historical significance and of transcendent character. This change resulted—to simplify a complex process—from the gradual amalgamation of two distinct eschatological concepts which were in vogue among Jews in the New Testament era: the expectation of a messiah who would re-establish Israel's political independence; and the expectation of the coming of the Son of Man, a mythical figure who would restore man to the primordial glory that was his before Adam fell from the friendship of God. A certain group of Jews, who believed that Jesus of Nazareth would take on a paramount role in the impending last act of human history, thought and spoke of him as the *Messiah*; another group of Jews, no less convinced of Jesus's vocation, thought of him in terms of the apocalyptic *Son of Man*. The two groups mixed, their members coalesced, and the combined group continued to use for their cult-hero the designation "Christ" (a title borrowed from legal-political terminology) while now attributing to the Christ the characteristics and functions of the transcendent, supra-historical Son of Man. The spread of Christianity to parts beyond Galilee and Judaea and the influx of converts with pagan antecedents accelerated the process of change, for to converts from the Gentile world the primary meaning of the

word "Christ-Messiah" was unknown. There is already in the New Testament, the Gospels as well as the Epistles, a difference between what Christians meant when they used the expression "Christ", and what "Messiah" meant in Jewish usage. Yet the fact that certain of his followers chose the title "Messiah" for him, and that their choice prevailed over others, indicates that an influential section within the early Christian fellowship connected with their belief in Jesus the expectation of political independence from foreign domination. In no other way can their choice of the title "Messiah" or "Christ" be explained.

But if the Gospels make it clear that it was Christians who harboured hopes of Israel's emancipation from political subjection hopes for the re-establishment of the ancient Jewish dynasty, and who believed that the final triumph of Israel over Rome would be the triumph of Good over Evil, the victory of God over Satan—the Gospels do not tell us whether these hopes arose in the lifetime of Jesus or only after the disciples' experience at Easter. We can say without hesitation that Jesus's followers cherished aspirations of Jewish national independence. We cannot say whether they were encouraged to such aspirations by Jesus himself. Only what his followers hoped, what they thought and expected, finds expression in such Gospel passages as Matthew 1:1-16 or Luke 3:23-31, in Luke 1:33, in Matthew 19:28 or Luke 22:30, or in Luke 24:21. What Jesus himself thought, what his aims were, what he asserted or what he expected, we simply do not know.

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9. "Synagoga quae habet Legem deserta vero et vaga, ac sine ulla potestate legis vivens . . . Homicidam punire non potest nec adulteram lapidare: haec enim sibi vidicat Romanorum potestas", Origen, *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*—VI 7 (Patrologia Graeca, Vol. 14, columns 1072, 1075).
10. Origen, *Letter to Africanus* 14 (Patrologia Graeca, Vol. 11, column 84).
11. John 18:31.
12. Augustine, *On John*, Tractate CXIV 4 (Patrologia Latina, Vol. 35, column 1937).
13. Chrysostom, *Homilies on John*, LXXXIII 4 (Patrologia Graeca, Vol. 59, column 452).
14. Mark 14:64b; Matthew 26:66.
15. Josephus, *The Jewish War*—II 231. For similar instances of Roman deference to the susceptibilities of the Jewish population, see *The Jewish War*—III 246 and *Antiquities*—XX 136.
16. Matthew 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-31. The two "family trees" were manifestly revised before being incorporated into the Gospels. In the evangelists' presentation, the line of Jesus's descent from David is broken (in Matthew 1:16 and Luke 3:23) as a result of rewording.

CHRISTIANITY AND INSANITY

THE primitive treatment of lunatics as illustrated by Hogarth's engraving of Bedlam, was, said David Thomson in the *Radio Times* (1/4/65), "strictly at variance both with early Christian and latter-day psychiatric methods". Mr. Thomson, like A.D. White (in *The Warfare of Science with Theology*), sees sweetness in Jesus's treatment of the insane. Yet, as White showed, the Greeks and Roman had made considerable progress towards a genuinely scientific attitude to madness (Hippocrates, in the fifth century BC, called it simply disease of the brain) whereas "the Christian Church at an early period in its existence virtually gave up the noble conquests of Greek and Roman science in this field, and originated, for persons supposed to be possessed, a regular discipline, developed out of dogmatic theology". And the belief in demoniacal possession—the cause of incalculable suffering for nearly 1 centuries—derived direct from Jesus.

Objections to "Objections"

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

Objections to Roman Catholicism (Constable, 18s.) has been hailed in some quarters as if it were a completely new departure. It is worth close analysis to see how far that is true. It has also been suggested that this is the first time the laity have dared to raise their voice in criticism of their Church. This, of course, is nonsense: read, for example, Kautsky. But it would be more pertinent to ask where such criticism has led them. The truth is that very often it has led them out of the Church. It is not without importance that we note on p.12, "To have attempted to produce this book with the Catholic *imprimatur* would, of course, have been absurd".

Objections to Roman Catholicism represents a certain airing of grievances, but does it go any deeper? Take the inflammable subject of birth control; despite all the talk, and a considerable amount of lay disobedience, all that has actually *happened* is that Archbishop Roberts has been silenced, and two priests suspended—suspended because they could no longer speak for the Church. A priest must speak for the official view of the Church. The Church, from her position of the centuries, knows very well how to temper the wind to the shorn lamb. This is an age, for secular reasons outside her control, much exercised by sexual and population problems. This has inevitably given rise to much re-examination of doctrine on these points. But while she keeps the Catholic housewife—subject to the pressure of non-Catholic views in her home neighbourhood—hopeful, we have yet to see any official change. The Church is not so flexible that it will depart from basic principles—it holds its ultimate duty to humanity as the guardian of divine truth too seriously. It cannot "save" itself at the cost of betraying itself. Birth control may prove to be *the* heresy of the present age. The Church has never pandered to human concupiscence: God who died on the Cross may have placed this cross on the shoulders of Catholic womanhood. If she had changed her doctrines in the 16th century she might have retained hold of large areas of Europe, but she would have ceased to be the Church.

It is elementary that the history of the Church is the history of heresy. From the beginning there were demurrers. A reading of Hughe's *History of the Church* or Belloc's *Great Heresies* shows that, generally speaking, in the earlier centuries, these were limited in numbers, and limited, also, as far as the doctrinal issue was concerned. As the Church hammered out its doctrine, it is inevitable that some there were who went the other way. From the 16th century onwards, heresy became more widespread, and more amorphous.

Well, then, it could be protested, there have been reform movements *within* the Church. Certainly, there have, and not just for the purpose of correcting blatant abuse, and scandal, laxity, simony, and the like, but a moving with the spirit of the times, a rethinking of old views into new world conditions.

Those who have suggested that *Objections to Roman Catholicism* is propaganda to deceive the non-Catholic world—for the Church is always the same—have been accused of cynicism. Such people would like to throw a bridge across to "enlightened" Catholics. Of course there have always been liberally-minded Catholics. It was the presence of such which enabled the present writer to remain in the Church more years than she might otherwise

have done. But one may well ask whether perhaps *they* are not trying to throw a bridge over to us. There is nothing, here and now, to prevent liberal-minded Catholics becoming even more liberal, and coming over to *us*. As a fact, historically, this generally is what has occurred. Either, as with Fénelon, the man is silenced, preferring to remain in the bosom of the Church, or, as with Modernism, too great a departure is made from basic tenets, and condemnation follows.

Personally, I consider the importance of *Objections to Roman Catholicism* has been exaggerated. In itself, that is; it is one little publication in one little point of place and time in the Church Universal, and people who see it as anything more are guilty of a false optimism. But it is symptomatic of a wider movement.

Avoiding the twin pitfalls of cynicism and optimism, there is, I would suggest, a middle path of *realism*. To discover this, let us ask the true nature of the *aggiornamento* of John XXIII. I think the clue to this lies in reminding ourselves what, in the Church's own eyes, is the work of the Church. In Catholic eyes, the Church is only the outward embodiment of a basic deposit of spiritual truths whose sole purpose is the *redemption* of men. Christ, did not give revelations—though, if He was God, He could have—about relativity, or molecular structure, or electricity—but He chose twelve apostles, and instituted the sacraments. "I am come that men may be saved." His work on earth done, He ascended to His Father, promising Divine Guidance—"I am with you all days"—and promising to send the Holy Spirit, the comforter (as is alleged to have occurred at Pentecost).

Now the Church today is not concerned with science, technology, and art. "All things are loss that I may gain Christ". Where she has fostered such things, and where she uses them, she still is not primarily concerned with them except as a means to an end, the salvation of souls. She has therefore always been concerned to think out, in each day and age, the means to secure this. In earlier centuries, when warfare was endemic, monasticism provided oases and havens. The monks were not there to do illuminated MSS, but to gain eternal life. In the 13th century, the itinerant friars went out to the people. After the Reformation, highly trained regular clergy strove to salvage as much of Europe as possible.

In the present century, owing to (to a very great extent) forces and movements quite outside the control of the Church, the Catholic layman in western Europe has become daily and increasingly an inhabitant of a material world less and less moulded by Catholic thought, views and influences. One does not need to enumerate these—TV, films, radio, subliminal advertising, the percolation of the ideas of Marx and Freud. He cannot but be affected—infected, even—by them in greater or lesser degree.

The idea of the layman playing a part in the Church is not new! It is he who constitutes the Church, for whom it exists. While congregationalism is rejected, even the Mass is offered as, "*Your sacrifice and my sacrifice*". But perhaps we are beginning to witness an even greater participation of the laity in their own self-direction, so to speak. There is nothing in the essence of Catholicism which would seem to make this impossible; indeed, all the likelihood, since this is at least supposed to be the age of democracy

(Concluded on page 132)

This Believing World

WHAT USED to be a trump card for the Roman Catholic Church was its attitude to what it called "mixed" marriages. Before a Catholic was allowed to marry outside the faith, he or she had to have the other partner's assurance that any child of the marriage would be brought up as a Catholic. Moreover every effort would be made to convert the non-Catholic spouse. It must have been a great wrench for the Vatican to give this up unconditionally; to allow the couple to settle the future for themselves irrespective of the Church.

★

POOR Dr. Robinson has been attacked enough (one would have thought) for his *Honest to God*, in which he unseated God Almighty from his throne in the clouds without exactly telling us where God is sitting now—unless it be in the inmost depths of our being. Dr. Robinson's latest book, *The New Reformation*, is considered by the Rev. D. F. Strudwick, Vicar of St. Clements, Dulwich (writing in the *Evening Standard*, 3/4/65) to be "utter rubbish". Indeed, the Vicar angrily denounced the Bishop for referring to "faithful parish priests and their flocks as 'Christian ghettos'". We haven't yet read the book, but we did read Dr. Robinson's recent article in the *New Statesman* (9/4/65) in which he expressed himself "not depressed" at the state of Anglicanism today.

★

HE WOULD be if he thought there were to be an intensifying of "the struggle to keep on the roof and step up the full-time professional ministry and 'get the people back'". But Dr. Robinson believes there are "sufficient signs of a radical minority prepared if necessary to let these things fall in, in the overriding conviction that if the Church is to find its life it must lose it—for others." But this does not mean . . . And so the Bishop goes on with his word play. The Church of England, we gather, is dying only to be resurrected. We don't know who Dr. Robinson is trying to "kid" unless it is himself.

★

DR. LOUIS LEAKEY's report on the latest archaeological excavations in Tanganyika (*The Observer*, 4/4/65), will probably cause some surprise. He believes that "nature experimented with various primitive man-like creatures before deciding on a satisfactory stock that led to present-day man," that it was not a question of "single jumps within a single species". Dr. Leakey's discoveries reveal a *Homo habilis* (able and mentally skilful) dating back two million years, and he estimates one skull discovered belonging to this species as at least one million years old. Yet there are still hundreds of millions of Christians, who still believe in dear old Genesis and its "divine" dates.

★

AND NOW the *Sunday Mirror* has given us a long article on the weighty problem—can a dog be a Christian? The question, it seems, has "started a storm". This first burst when the owner of a Great Dane put a £90 cross over its grave when it died. Many Christians considered this blasphemy, but it was argued in defence that the dog came "from a Christian family" The Rev. R. Acworth, Vicar of Chobham, stepped in however, and pointed out that the dog had not been baptised, and no one can be a Christian unless he (or it) was baptised. In heaven, he maintained, even "a dog won't turn into a human", for "it's a different species".

Philosophy of Science—Some Facets

5—PERCEPTIONS AND CAUSES

By DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

WHEN the sun shines on a fall of snow, and the snow begins to melt, we think of the sun as acting on the snow and causing its change of condition. And, an assistant in a science laboratory will light a water heater in the confident belief that it will cause the boiling of the water that he needs for an experiment. All our behaviour, in fact, is based on this intuitive belief that the things in the world act on each other and cause changes in each other.

However, David Hume, the 18th-century philosopher, showed that our senses give us no grounds for this belief. All that they show us are recurring patterns of events without any indication of causal connection between them. The sun comes out and, a little while later, the snow begins to melt. A heater is lit and, a little while later, the water begins to boil. Repetitions of such sequences lead us, by induction to expect similar repetitions in the future. There is never a direct experience of the action of the sun on snow or of heat on water.

Similarly, when one billiard ball strikes another we are never aware, through the senses, of how movement is imparted from the one to the other. Nor are the mathematical-mechanical concepts of mass, inertia and momentum a demonstration of the means by which the billiard balls interact; they might be regarded as an accurate means of describing the often repeated pattern of events in a game of billiards.

The philosopher A. N. Whitehead, who died in 1947, agreed that ordinary sense perception alone could give us no way of escape from Hume's scepticism. But Whitehead also maintained that, in fact, ordinary sense perception is not our only window into the world outside us.

In addition to the clear, but causally insignificant, sense data presented by our sense there is a second mode of perception. This second mode, which is also associated with our sense organs, yields a direct but vague sense of causal connection. Normally, the functioning of this causal mode is in the background of our experience.

Our awareness of this second mode of perception is heightened, Whitehead reminds us, when ordinary sense perception is for any reason at a low level of activity. In a darkened room, for example, there is a strong awareness of the presence of the outside world that allows us no doubt that man and his environment interact and cause changes in each other.

OBJECTIONS TO "OBJECTIONS"

(Concluded from page 131)

and the common man, seems to point in the other direction. This, however, is only a matter of means. De la Bedoyere reminds us himself (*Objections to Roman Catholicism*, p.14) that "In its spiritual and moral teaching the Church of Rome cannot change". Two and two still make four, whatever new methods the maths master adopts to drive the fact into his pupils' heads. The Church remains solely concerned with the radiation of what it believes to be saving and divine truth through the evanescent forms of material life. If we reject those basic beliefs, this book changes nothing for us. This is not cynicism; it is realism. Insofar, however, as it gives the Church new talking points, and arouses fresh non-Catholic interest, it does become—at least temporarily—significant.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Brighton Young Socialists (179 Lewes Road, Brighton 7), Tuesday, April 27th, 8.15 p.m. Public Debate, "That Religious Instruction and Collective Worship should continue in State Schools". NSS speaker: MARGARET MCILROY.

Bristol Humanist Group (Kelmescott, 4 Portland Street, Clifton), Sunday, April 25th, 7.30 p.m.: MR. and MRS. WATTS, "Problems of Humanist Parents".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, April 25th, 11 a.m.: DR. STARK MURRAY, "Dilemmas of the Modern Doctor".

Worthington and Malden & Coombe and Kingston Branches NSS (The White Hart, Kingston Bridge, Hampton Wick), Friday, April 23rd, 8 p.m. A meeting.

Notes and News

THIS week we print the second, concluding part of Paul Winter's, "The Trial of Jesus", and we remind readers that a more analytical and more detailed study of the subject will be found in the author's book *On the Trial of Jesus*, published a few years ago by B. Blackwell & Co. Oxford (40s.).

★

POPE PAUL—it was announced from the Vatican on April 19th—intended no offence to the Jews in a sermon he preached on Passion Sunday. He had merely been explaining the Gospel lesson to the faithful attending mass, showing how even today the world was rejecting Christ as he had been rejected in his lifetime. The Pope was reported to have said in his sermon that the Jewish people "when Christ came, spoke and showed himself, not only did not recognise him, but fought against him, slandered and injured him, and finally were to kill him" (*The Guardian*, 11/4/65). A telegram of protest to the Pope from Dr. Ciperno, President of the Italian Jewish community expressed "sorrowful amazement for the confirmation of the accusation against the Jews of . . . decide, the source of centuries of tragic injustices towards the Jews to which the solemn statements of the Vatican Council have put an end for ever".

In an interview published in the *Sunday Times* (11/4/65) the Lord Chamberlain, Lord Cobbold, told J. W. Lambert that religious plays caused him the most difficulty, and the single play that had given him "the most preoccupation" was *The Representative*. In the end he had asked for "one or two references to Pope Pius to be modified". Asked what he would do if he were confronted with a play which "deliberately set out to be a savagely satirical attack on Christianity", Lord Cobbold replied: "Well, I should have to look at the actual play and judge it on its merits. But I would start with a bias against it." And then judge it on its merits?

★

JOHN OSBORNE (in the same issue of the *Sunday Times*) was the only one, to our knowledge, who thought—as we do—that the newspaper critics had contributed to the downfall of *Not So Much a Programme*. Most of the stones have—as Mr. Osborne said—been hurled at David Frost and Ned Sherrin. For these two young men the middle classes had "stretched themselves in their search for a dialectic of morality to a range of language that goes all the way from the everyday 'cheap sneers', 'puerile', 'undergraduate', that reliable old standby, and 'bad taste', to Cassandra's thundering 'embarrassing smug adolescent exhibitionism' and on to the visible frontiers of bourgeois protest with 'peddlars of filth and smut and destroyers of all that Britain holds dear.'" Though not mentioned by Mr. Osborne, the *Guardian's* Roman Catholic TV critic Mary Crozier was one whose typewriter rattled "in spite of a great deal of simulated boredom". Even the *Sunday Times's* own critic, Maurice Wiggin wrote of "the snide and heartless Sherrin"—as Mr. Osborne noted.

★

In a letter to the *New Statesman* (9/4/65), Sir Hugh Carleton Green denied that he had "caved in" to the critics of *Not So Much a Programme*. The programme was ending its run on the scheduled date and he hoped to have "something better next autumn". So now we must wait and see. But in the meantime we shall—like one of the exceptional critics, Maurice Richardson—miss Mr. Sherrin's programme.

★

THE March issue of the *Essex Teacher*, magazine of the Essex County Teachers' Association NUT, contained an article on "Religion in Schools" by the President of the National Secular Society, David Tribe. Teachers have been quiet too long, Mr. Tribe said. "Day schools are not the places to promote religion. This is a job of churches and Sunday schools . . . teachers must insist that the school curriculum is worked out according to academic principles and not ecclesiastico-political compromises devised outside the school". Another (anonymous) writer in the same magazine suggested an experiment to test the sincerity of those who daily parade for the "corporate act". The schools should be opened at 8.30 a.m. for a voluntary religious service to be followed by a compulsory "secular" assembly for notices and announcements.

★

"INVITE parents to co-operate by sending their children to school early enough to attend the service," the writer continued. "Let the staff be in no doubt that they, too, are free to absent themselves. (I know the statutory position and I know, too, that head-teachers can and do exert pressure.) It would be interesting to see what the response is". It would indeed. It might be even more interesting—and enlightening—to hold the service after school hours and see how many children and staff stayed on for it.

David and Solomon

By H. CUTNER

THERE are still many disbelievers in Adam, Noah and even Moses, who think that David and Solomon were historical personages, with successors who have been named in Assyrian literature. How could Manasseh and Hezekiah have lived if they had no ancestors, and why should not these be David and Solomon?

Unfortunately, no doubt moved by the laudable desire to keep his letter short, "Ben Yehudah" (THE FREE-THINKER, 19/2/65) gave no "chapter and verse" for his statement that Manasseh and Hezekiah are mentioned in Assyrian literature. I do not doubt that they are, but I should want to know the dates assigned to this literature. And I should want to compare them with the date assigned to the Book of Kings where they are mentioned in the Bible.

And, at the outset, let me quote what the *Encyclopedia Biblica* asserts in its long article on "Names". In column 2375, it says that "a considerable number of names in the Old Testament must be regarded as fictitious". Down to Abraham they are "all fictitious"—in some cases "of non-Hebrew origin". The writer of Chronicles, says the *EB*, "mentions many Levites whose names rest upon no better documentary evidence than the description of the religious services performed by the said Levites according to the post-exile ritual". It is a fascinating subject, and the *EB* devotes 55 columns of very specialised analyses to the problem.

The upshot is quite clear. The greater percentage of the names in the Bible are of people who never existed. The *EB* would perhaps not agree that David and Solomon belong to that category, but it does admit that "the chronology of the life of David is most uncertain". And as for his name, you can take your choice. It might be "Dod" or "Dodo" or "Dodiel". And "to accept the round number of forty years assigned to David and Solomon as strictly historical would be uncritical". Like his chronology, "the early history of David is most uncertain". In fact it is most difficult to get at any fact, as opposed to legend. Winckler "indeed denies that there is such a kernel of facts in the romantic" early history of David. And all we know of David's early history is that he had a father called Jesse.

As for that favourite story of our childhood, David's encounter with Goliath, "it has been interpolated from some lost history of David", but it "has not the truth of history". The truth is that if one believes in the Bible and accepts its narratives, then one will accept David. If one does not accept the truth of the Bible but considers it to have been constructed from various kinds of current stories with a very strong element of sun and star worship on which almost all ancient religions rested in part (the other part was phallic), then the story of David is as mythical as that of Vulcan.

I see no reason in fact to treat the story of David any differently from the story of Esther which the *EB* asserts "has no historical kernel". Haman was the principal God of the Elamites, Mordecai was the great God Marduk of the Babylonians, Esther was Astarte, often called Venus, and so on. It is all fiction, if interesting fiction. And it is only because we have been so indoctrinated with the Bible that we still believe in David.

Solomon, we are told, built a magnificent temple. Yet not a shred of evidence has ever been produced that this temple ever existed. Not a brick has been found in any archaeological discoveries in Palestine.

The books in the Bible which deal with David are known as those of Samuel, and about all we can get from the critics is that they were certainly not written by anybody called Samuel. He died in the first book, and seven chapters follow without his name being mentioned; nor is he mentioned in the second book. When and where it was written nobody knows. In fact, Samuel, as we have it, is an edited version of documents of quite unknown authenticity. Its value is probably no more than that of Esther.

But what about the Assyrian literature? In *Researches in Oriental History* by G. W. Brown, M.D. (1894), which has a chapter dealing with Assyrian history in relation to Judaism, it is alleged that anything which is *fact* in the Pentateuch, was taken from Babylonian records—he quotes Professor Sayce, the great Assyrian authority—and that the stories of Jacob and Joseph as well as the names of Saul, David, and Solomon, are the names and stories of Babylonian inferior Gods. Dr. Brown, however, admits that the exact details extracted from Sayce would never be "admitted" by believers in "the mythical history of the Jews". It was the facts drawn from mainly Christian authorities, which compelled Dr. Brown to assert that nearly everything in the Bible is completely mythical.

But let me assure "Ben-Yehudah" that I have read dozens of other works confirming Dr. Brown; and if I have not dealt with Jewish myths very much in these columns, it is because Christianity is a bigger, and for that matter, a worse influence than Judaism.

Humanism and the Post War Generation

By ROBIN M. DERRICOURT

It is becoming increasingly apparent to Christians and Humanists alike that the generation which has grown up since the war does not recognise those moral standards which previous generations more or less accepted. The causes of this are many and complex, but it seems to me that the "drop" in morals is not unconnected with that increasing scepticism in religious dogma which we call rationalism. In education moral training has long been completely connected with religion. When the basis of the morality—the divinity of Christ, the Bible, a personal god, etc.—is challenged by an individual, the morality is likewise challenged.

Christians might agree in this connection between the lapse in popular religious beliefs and the lapse in morality. To them young people may seem to have slipped into sin, to be in need of a religious rebirth. To Humanists, however, it should seem that the criticised generation has progressed rather than regressed: it has challenged the orthodox and irrational values of its Christian forefathers.

It is surely necessary that some change be made to obviate the results of the low or, rather, absent morality. I do not believe in the glories of a high moral code, but for the benefit of the members of society it is desirable that violence and anti-social traits be ended. This can be achieved best by a synthesis of social and personal readjustments.

It is the task of the sociologist and social psychologist to discover what social readjustments are needed to remove those causes of anti-social behaviour which are dependent

on environment and upbringing. One change which some Humanists might consider it reasonable to recommend is that moral training be not dependent on religious training nor be at all intense.

I believe, however, that young people nowadays will challenge values given them by their elders, whether with religious justifications behind the values or not. This is where the Humanist movement can help to solve the problem of teenage morals better than the Church, with regard to personal readjustments. The Church says bring religion back to young people; this would solve problems of morality and delinquency. But once someone has seen through religion it is difficult to persuade him to readopt it. Unless it actually becomes a *fashion* to be a Christian, the Church has little hope of success.

The only kind of moral philosophy which is practically achieved is a non-religious one built up by agreement, a social rather than an individual decision, but a decision agreed to by all. Let young people decide their own morality, and let us have no more moral instruction and demands by churchmen, educationalists, sociologists or Humanists, for this is likely to lead to a complete rejection of these moral standards.

How then do we bring it about that young people consciously select a morality beneficial to the individuals of their social group and others? Discussion is perhaps the best way, and why not discussion as the Churches use it—in the youth club? The report on the first Humanist youth club (*Humanist News*, April 1964) seemed of great promise. In this report the hope is voiced that the youth club will help the members “to evaluate a positive moral ethic”. This is, I am sure, the only way a morality can be brought to young people—no screaming from pulpits that so-and-so is wrong.

It is to be hoped that the recently formed and commendable Humanist Youth Service Committee will work in this direction, and will not fall into the trap of copying the Churches and dictating a morality. Their efforts to involve Humanists in youth service provide a praiseworthy beginning.

Not all young people would join such youth clubs, though they might feel easier joining a club which was not bound to a church. The positive morality evolved by the members of these clubs should, however, set a new standard of teenage society which would influence the less rational members. Humanist youth clubs should not endeavour to put forward a quasi-Christian idea of an ethical universe, of man's duty to country, government, laws and so on, but should provide a forum for young people to develop ideas and patterns of behaviour in contact with each other. Only experiments will show whether this approach to morality works: we can but try.

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From Canada

By LANJE GARDYEN

SINCE the start of the current school year—the Ontario *Windsor Star* reported on March 13th—a young Roman Catholic schoolteacher has been organising his class along Nazi lines, and has held up two “great leaders of man”, Adolf Hitler and Jesus Christ as models to emulate.

Brother Rene Lahaie, aged 22, a member of the Order of Christian School Teachers, is in charge of a class of seventh-grade students (aged 13) at La Mennais French-language school in Montreal. Above the blackboard in his classroom is the standard crucifix, flanked by two pictures drawn by him. On the right is Christ and on the left Hitler. Above the former is a cross; above the latter a swastika. The students are given military ranks such as corporal, lieutenant, or, for the top students, SS after Hitler's *schutz-staffel* storm troopers.

In an interview with the French Montreal paper, *La Presse*, Brother Lahaie argued that “Hitler and Jesus Christ had many common qualities”. Both of them had “large quantities of human courage, perseverance, tenacity and generosity, and both had a great effect on the world,” he said. Asked the meaning of the phrase “Heil Christ” on the blackboard, Brother Lahaie said it was a slogan meaning “Christ wills it”, which the students repeated as they stood at attention with arms outstretched. On some mornings this replaced the usual prayer and sign of the cross. Hitler had been introduced into the classroom as an experiment to arouse the interest of students and “pep them up”.

The school director, Brother Hector Asselin, defended the teacher's idea. He had tried to make students understand that there were people who had great influence upon men, who had been leaders. And Brother Asselin could not understand the sudden interest shown by the press. There was no secret about the class; parents knew about it and “many” had visited the classroom in person. The room was also used for adult English-language night classes, and “hundreds” of people must have seen the pictures.

Jean-Marie Mathieu, teaching director of the Montreal Roman Catholic school commission denied all knowledge of the “experiment”. “I swear to you,” he said in an interview, “that this is the first news that I have had about it”. There would, he promised, be an inquiry. But he could not, for the moment, make a judgment, “for I don't have all the facts.” At first sight, though, he added, it seemed “decidedly extraordinary”.

From French-Canadian Catholic priest to Dutch atheist couple, the Bergsmas, who were denied citizenship by an Ontario judge because “The things we believe in this country stand for Christianity . . . believing in Christ's teaching.” Judge Lech's amazing ruling has now been upheld on appeal.

I say “amazing”, because the Canadian Citizenship Act does not make belief in God a requirement for naturalisation. Moreover, Article 5 of the Oaths of Allegiance Act reads:

All persons allowed by law in civil cases, in any part of Canada, to affirm instead of making oath, shall be permitted to take an affirmation of allegiance in the like terms, mutatis mutandis as the said oath of allegiance.

Such affirmation of allegiance, taken before the proper officer, shall in all cases be accepted from such persons in lieu of such an oath, and shall as to such affirmants have the like effect as the said oath of allegiance.

It is encouraging to note that the press strongly dissented from the court judgment. “We hope,” said the *Montreal Star* (March 19th) “this case will go to the Supreme Court

of Canada and that there the arguments of the learned judges in Ontario will be struck down." But if the judges' reading of the Citizenship Act was correct, the act was "an iniquity", and "Parliament should change it as quickly as possible".

There are, in fact, some signs that Parliament will change the act in the light of the Bergsma case.

Ethics and Humanity

By A. WRIGHT

ACCORDING to the ancient view ethics is normative, i.e. it teaches what ought to be. The Christian view is that ethics is indeed normative in the sense of a doctrine, but not in the sense of efficacy or influence. Doctrine alone is without effect; strength and help must come from another quarter—God.

Virtue to Socrates was a knowledge of the good. But what did he mean by good? It might be asked, "good for what?" The answer is obviously, "good for us", and by that token it becomes a merely relative good.

Knowledge indeed can never make the will wholly good. It can only alter its direction momentarily and make us cease seeking our happiness. This agrees with Spinoza that good is simply anything that is relative to any purpose that we happen to have.

Again to say that virtue is a knowledge of the good is all very well in its way to show the strong faith of the Greek mind in reason (a faith that is found even in neoplatonism) but then Socrates himself could not shut his eyes to the fact that men knew what was apparently good yet often did what was apparently bad.

Schopenhauer did not believe that virtue could be reasoned into man on rationalistic principles. "The question handled by Plato and Seneca, whether virtue can be taught is to be answered in the negative" says Schopenhauer. "And just as little as all the professors of aesthetics could impart to anyone the power of producing works of genius, i.e., genuine works of art, so little could all the professors of ethics and preachers of virtue transform an ignoble into a virtuous and noble character, the impossibility of which is very much more apparent than of turning lead into gold." Schopenhauer also says that the search for a system of ethics and a first principle of the same, which would have practical influence and would actually transform and better the human race, is just like the search for the philosopher's stone. Schopenhauer's view is that ethics is not at all normative; it can neither determine life nor throw any light on how it should be determined.

When we seriously consider the evil, and the misery and the suffering in the world and ponder upon all the systems that were supposed to raise the human race on high, we come to see quite clearly how profound Schopenhauer's philosophy and ethics were.

From what has been said, how can we as intelligent people seriously believe that where Buddhism and Christianity have failed, Humanism will succeed? The suffering in the world was Schopenhauer's evidence. Is there any less evidence available today? Can we assert there will be less tomorrow?

TV REMINDER

As intimated last week, David Tribe, President of the National Secular Society, will be appearing with Methodist minister Dr. Donald Soper in the Independent Television programme, *The Sunday Break* on April 25th.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. R. Smith (*THE FREETHINKER*, 26/2/65) has accused me (*ibid.*, 12/2/65) of making comments unbecoming a rationalist. Rather than turn in my badge, I should like to take him to task for saying that my assertion of the existence of pain fitting in quite understandably with a rationalistic view of the world was "ridiculous". He then goes on to say that I am promoting an optimistic system to explain misery away.

First of all I get the definite impression Mr. Smith thinks that explanations are only used for explaining things away much as Mary Baker Eddy did with sickness; however, most of us use explanations to relate what we think is the nature or mechanism of a phenomenon. Secondly, optimism or pessimism need not even enter the picture in such an explanation but would enter it during any discussion as to whether misery can be alleviated solely by human efforts (a rationalistic approach) or whether these efforts are doomed to failure. From his remarks I take it Mr. Smith is a pessimistic rationalist.

Many forms of pain are at variance with an all-loving God but since rationalists do not believe in God, this aspect of the pain problem does not arise for them. To counteract the involved Christian theories of misery being caused by sin, the devil, divine chastisement, or what not, the rationalist simply shows how some forms of misery are caused by naturally occurring disease, improper distribution of resources, unkindness and so on. If these are valid causes of pain then is it ridiculous to explain misery on these simple grounds, and furthermore where does optimism enter the picture unless one goes on to assess the chances of success of methods to alleviate misery?

I confess that I am an optimist. To be a pessimist, and to be consistent in one's actions with this outlook, is to bring about a paralysis of remedial endeavour since all attempts are dogmatically foreordained to failure. I have the sneaking feeling that the professional pessimist is disappointed when his attitudes are proved wrong through the advent of something worthwhile.

D. M. CHAPMAN

May I say how much I resent the R. Smithology in which life is spent contemplating death and women are only "womanly" when as irrational as the men who generalise about them? I suggest that so long as our own death is likely to cause more bother than relief, we have a duty to delay it as long as possible. Emotion and energy spent on dreading the inevitable are wasted and would be better spent on trying to decrease the suffering of mankind. As Mr. McCall has said, death is only one of many facts and by no means the most interesting. Only the very young can have time for everything there is to do that *is* interesting and constructive.

Those who have had stomach ulcers know that depression is one of the symptoms. Anyone who is constantly depressed should consult his or her doctor and should not be allowed to try and persuade others that their resentment of life is healthy.

I believe that Democritus of Abdera (c.420 BC) said that to live badly is not to live badly, but to spend a long time dying. The Humanist, Mr. Smith, wants to spend a long time *living* and to do that we must be pro-life all the way.

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AMERICANS have looked upon and treated the Roman Catholic Church in their traditionally tolerant attitude toward all religions, unwilling to believe that a political Church would try to gain ascendancy over their government. There are three reasons why we are deceived concerning the aims and activities of the Roman Church: (1) our indifference to church-state relations as a factor in government; (2) our forgetfulness of the disastrous effects of Roman political ecclesiasticism in past centuries; (3) the purposeful confusion created by Roman Catholic propaganda concerning the real aims of Roman Catholic policy in democratic countries.

The unchanging goal of the Catholic Church is the restoration of its status as the only legally recognised Church in Christendom. For it claims as its right, exclusive jurisdiction over all Christians—Protestant, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic—throughout the world. Its hierarchy can protest that its primary interest is not this or that particular form of government, economics, or social order, since its ultimate object is the re-establishment of its universal spiritual dominion. In order to realise this universal dominion, however, the immediate object is to foster the establishment of political, social, economic, and even religious regimes that will best guarantee the freedom of the Roman Catholic Church and, in the second place, will allow maximum assistance for the attainment of all the goals of the Church. The civil regime may be communistic, socialistic, democratic, or diabolically totalitarian—it matters little so long as the Catholic Church can manage to exist and move towards her unchanging goal. Her ways with world governments are devious and her bishops in politics, as in chess, move obliquely.

The active collaboration of the Vatican with the Axis powers in the Second World War demonstrates how the Roman Catholic Church manoeuvres to achieve her selfish aims. Lewis Mumford in his book, *Faith for Living* (p. 160), writes: "Political interpreters have set various dates for the beginning of the Fascist uprising against civilisation; but most of them go back no further than 1931. This is a curious blindness; the betrayal of the Christian world, very plainly, took place in 1929, in the Concordat that was made between Mussolini and the Pope."

Italy

It was Pope Pius XI who really brought Mussolini and his Fascism to power in Italy. Without protection from someone even higher than the king, Mussolini could not have become dictator of Italy overnight. The Fascist "March on Rome" was a sorry parade (Mussolini went by train); il Duce hadn't even the price of a dress suit for his interview with the King, and the few guns possessed by his followers were hired and paid for by others. A single regiment of the Roman garrison could have quickly wiped out this Fascist mummery. But the recently elected Pope Pius XI, obsessed with the fear of Soviet world revolution, had recognised Mussolini as "a gift of Providence", the man to save Europe from Bolshevism and

restore the universal dominion of the Roman Catholic Church.

As Cardinal Ratti, Archbishop of Milan, Pius XI had known and studied Mussolini in that industrial city, and on one occasion had him and a band of his Blackshirts occupy seats of honour in il Duomo, the cathedral in Milan. William Teeling, Irish Catholic author (in his *The Pope in Politics*, p. 28), who knew Pope Pius XI personally,

described him as "far more of a Mussolini and an autocratic dictator than is Mussolini himself." Pierre van Paassen (*Days of Our Years*, pp. 187-188) tells us of the relief felt by Pope Pius XI after Mussolini's arrival in Rome: "Monsignor von Gerlach told me in a con-

fidential mood that the night following the Duce's arrival in Rome the Holy Father slept in peace for the first time in many months".

The Lateran Treaty

The Lateran Treaty and Concordat with Mussolini consummated the union between the Vatican and Fascism. The Catholic Church became the National Church of Italy with countless special privileges of state protection for the clergy and religious orders. Catholic instruction was introduced into all schools and Canon Law marriages recognised by the State. Only bishops acceptable to Mussolini were to be appointed, and all bishops were required to take the following oath to the Fascist State: "I swear and promise neither to join in any agreement nor to be present at any meeting which may injure the Italian State and public order, and that I will not permit my clergy to do so. Taking heed for the good and interest of the Italian State, I will seek to avoid any harm that may threaten it."

Pope Pius XI held a strong bargaining card over the head of Mussolini by his control over the destiny of the Catholic Popular Party, headed by the liberal-minded priest Don Sturzo. Teeling (*The Pope in Politics*, p. 104) assures us that the Fascists "realised that the only party too powerful for them in Italy was the Popular Party which was essentially Catholic". Pius XI, however, had no love for the Popular Party, especially since it had endorsed individual liberty at its last convention. Had he so desired, he could have defeated Fascism in Italy by supporting this Catholic party. But Pius XI's whole plan of action was to combine with Fascism to wipe out all traces of democracy from both state and church; only by destroying all lay Catholic representation in politics could the Pope treat with the dictators over the heads of the people. Thus the Popular Party was dissolved, in order that Fascism could entrench itself in Italy; and on June 3rd, 1923, Don Sturzo was forced to hand in his resignation to Pope Pius XI and go into exile.

Disagreements

Disagreements arose between Mussolini and the Pope in the years immediately following the signing of the Lateran Pact. The rivalry between the two dictators, one in the Church and the other in the State, broke into an open quarrel in 1931. Chief among the causes for this

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Catholicism and Fascism

By L. H. LEHMANN

love-quarrel was the matter of interpreting who should have supreme control over education. The Pope insisted that the priests should virtually control the whole life and curriculum of the school. Intended for American consumption as well was the following dictum of the Pope: "The full and perfect right to educate does not belong to the State but to the Church, and the State cannot impede or restrict it in the exercise and fulfilment of its right or confine it to the subsidised teaching of religious truth."

Pope Pius also considered Mussolini's interpretation of the Concordat too lenient towards the freedom of other religions in Italy. Pius insisted that other religions had no rights in Italy, and were "permitted" to worship merely for reasons of expediency. "In a Catholic State," said Pius, "liberty of conscience and discussion must be understood and carried out in accordance with Catholic teaching and law," which suppresses it. He also held that no criticism of the Catholic religion could be allowed, and that the terms of the Concordat called for punishment by law of any discussion of religion, written or oral, that might "easily lead astray the good faith of the less enlightened." Mussolini himself, in 1930, had rewritten the Criminal Code and in Article 402 decreed punishment by imprisonment for anyone who vilifies "the religion of the State".

Pius XI set forth these complaints in his encyclical *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* ("We have no need"), in which he went so far as to talk about "the fall of the State which is dependent upon Vatican City for its being". But no such thing happened, and six months later the quarrel was settled. "After 1931," says van Paassen (*Days of Our Years*, p. 463), "little more was heard of friction between the two, a circumstance that would tend to show that there has since been a progressive Vaticanisation of Italy as well as a Fascistisation of the Vatican". The only other time a Pope complained about any act of Fascism was when Pope Pius XII expressed his annoyance that Mussolini chose Good Friday (1939) to invade Albania.

Germany

Underlying papal policy for the past hundred years is the settled conviction that a strong militaristic and authoritarian Germany is essential for the continuance of the Roman Catholic Church's pre-eminence in Christendom. Evidence of this can be seen in the late Kaiser Wilhelm's *Memoirs* where he tells of his visit to Pope Leo XIII. Following are the Kaiser's own words: "It was of interest to me that the Pope said to me on this occasion that Germany must become the sword of the Catholic Church. I remarked that the old Roman Empire of the German nation no longer existed, and that conditions had changed. But he stuck to his words."

What Pope Leo tried to make plain to the Kaiser was that the Holy Roman Empire would have to be restored by force of war, as alone it could be. Such a war would be fought to attain two objectives: (1) the ousting of Protestant British and Masonic influence from Europe in the West; and (2) the federation of all central European states as an impregnable bulwark against Russian and Slavic invasion from the East. These were also Hitler's avowed objectives, testified to in the USA by none other than the Jesuit Edmund Walsh, Director of the Jesuit School of Diplomacy in Washington, DC. The *New York Times* (February 17th, 1940), reported the following statement of his in a public speech in the nation's capital: "The German war aims were outlined tonight as a re-establishment of the Holy Roman Empire by Doctor Edmund A. Walsh, regent of the Foreign Service School of Georgetown University. Dr. Walsh said that he heard Adolf Hitler say that the Holy Roman Empire, which was a

German Empire, must be re-established."

As late as October 9th, 1943, the *New York Post* reported that this same Father Edmund Walsh and his co-instructors of the Jesuit School for Foreign Service were teaching US Army classes that "a revival of the Holy Roman Empire was the only solution of the German problem".

Pius XII

No one understood this more clearly than Pope Pius XII. His pro-Germanism is openly admitted by his official Catholic biographer, Kees van Hoek. "Cardinal Pacelli", he says, "has always been known for his strong German leanings". He was Papal Nuncio in Munich from 1917 to 1925, and in Berlin from 1925 to 1929, when he was made Papal Secretary of State to Pope Pius XI. Viscount d'Abernon, Britain's first ambassador to the Weimar Republic, in his memoirs calls Cardinal Pacelli "the best informed man in the Reich". Pacelli knew and studied Hitler and his Nazi party at first hand, and was in Munich when *Mein Kampf* was first published there. Within six months of Hitler's accession to power in 1933, he signed the Vatican Concordat with Hitler's Third Reich. The British Annual Register of 1933 (p. 169) attributed Hitler's rise to power in large part to "the gigantic swing-over of the Catholic middle class in west and south Germany to the Nazi Party". Liberal Catholic elements in Germany gave vent to their displeasure with Hitler's regime and objected to the Vatican tie-up with him. But the Catholic *Revue des Deux Mondes* (January 15th, 1935), reported that orders were sent to the German bishops who, at their annual conference at Fulda, issued their pastoral letter, which declared in part: "There is no need to speak at length of the task which our people and our country are called upon to undertake. May our Fuehrer, with the help of God, succeed in this extraordinarily difficult work . . ."

Again in August, 1940, with France and most of Europe under Hitler's heel, the German bishops drew up another pastoral letter at Fulda which according to a dispatch from Berlin to the *New York Times* (August 27th), contained "a solemn pledge of loyalty to Chancellor Hitler". Since a Hitler victory at that time seemed to the bishops to promise an early end to the war, this pastoral letter was directed to be read from all Catholic pulpits. Forty-five of the forty-eight bishops of Germany were present on the occasion, together with Msgr. Orsenigo, Papal Nuncio to Nazi Germany.

Fritz Thyssen, Catholic steel magnate, in his book *I Paid Hitler*, published in the United States in 1940, states that the whole plan of Hitler's National Socialism (as he understood it) was to establish a confederation of Central European countries under a Catholic monarch. When he went to Switzerland in 1940, Thyssen published an article in the Swiss *Arbeiterzeitung* entitled "Pius XII, as Nuncio Brought Hitler to Power". "The idea," he wrote, "was to have a sort of Christian Corporate State organised according to the classes, which would be supported by the Churches—in the West by the Catholic, and in the East by the Protestant—and by the Army."

This plan for the restoration of the Holy Roman Empire was propagandised in the United States by prominent Catholic spokesmen shortly after Hitler forced Austria and Czechoslovakia into his "Greater Germany". Justice Herbert O'Brien, writing in the *New York Herald Tribune* (March 29th, 1938), applauded Hitler's conquests as "a natural readjustment in Europe," and warned the United States against any attempt to join with England and France to stop it. A war for this purpose, he declared, would be unjust, since its object would be "to oppose certain political

(Concluded on page 142)

The Spread of Catholicism

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

It should be disturbing to people of all views that in this country the Catholic schools provide a large percentage of potential criminals. Nevertheless, many schools have been made efficient by the inspectorate of a secular government, and the criticisms often levelled against Catholic schools, which may have been true in past years, are so no longer. The fact is, we have less cause to be worried by the inefficient Catholic schools than by the efficient ones, as an instrument of evangelisation all over England, and of high policy directed at national level. These are creating an articulate, middle-class, educated Catholic intelligentsia, leaders of tomorrow's society.

The North Wales Council of Evangelical Churches (together with, no doubt, other Protestant bodies) has expressed concern at the inroads of Catholicism into Wales. Was it concerned, could it ever have believed in the recovery of Catholicism sixty-three years ago? In 1902 a handful of nuns, destitute refugees expelled from Brittany, stood at the quayside in Southampton, succoured by the Red Cross. They went to live in Wales. Today, this order alone has seven schools flourishing there, each with a high percentage of non-Catholic pupils.

"Why, when you were in such straits, did you not go to a more friendly area?" I asked of them. "The bishops wanted us here," was the reply. The clergy are often Irish, that is, Celts; and nationalists, too. The churches are dedicated to native Welsh saints, St. Padarn, St. Cadoc, St. Illtydd. Cambria was evangelised from Ireland in the 5th and 6th centuries. There is nothing alien about Catholicism, runs the argument; Wales was Catholic for a thousand years; it can be converted from Ireland again. Now the clergy learn Welsh and fan nationalist hopes.

The history of the Catholic Church in England, since 1829 is one of expansion. This has been achieved by highly skilled planning. It is dangerously inept and outdated to direct our attention solely to Catholic inefficiency. Sister Columba, Prefect of Studies to the Helpers of the Holy Souls, Camden Town, speaking of their work, said recently, "The Holy See is behind all this. Today every sister must be qualified in her work. The day of dedicated incompetence has gone." What will happen in the next 136 years if this spirit of awareness revivifies Catholic life in this country, unopposed by militant Freethought?

In 1940, two members of an order which already had a number of first-rate voluntary-aided schools, were sent to a city where previously no convent school existed. At first they lodged in a small private house purchased from the funds of their order (religious orders, having continuing personality, are good financial securities) and opened with a small group of pupils. It is now a two-stream grammar school of over 400, "recognised" by the Ministry of Education. Every year, some thirty or more girls leave that school attuned to Catholicism, friendly to it, even if not a single one has actually been received into the Church. Most will marry; their daughters will go back, their sons (now "prejudice" has been dispelled) to the boys' Catholic school which was founded at the same time. What is more, every single one of these girls will hold neo-Catholic views on history, biology, theology and social problems. This pattern is significantly repeated all over the country.

The truth is, there are still ultra-establishment circles which believe that Catholicism should be supported as a bulwark against Communism, and they are prepared to

subsidise its sectarian schools to build a resistance against the menace they fear, without realising they are subsidising a far more dangerous dictatorship.

The present Parliament has a large group of Catholic members—an effective, pressure group. There are far more agnostic, atheistic and indifferentist members, but we do not lobby them, or brief them concerning our interests. Thus we have the spectacle of them bending over backwards, giving inch-by-inch concessions to the Catholics, in an attempt not to seem narrow-minded or intolerant. In ecclesiastical measures, the line is "After all, the bishops are the experts; they should know!" Do they? These are the bishops of whom the late Lord Alexander said in the Lords on July 13th, 1964, that he would like to ask each and every one of them if he was a Protestant! The fact is, of course, that nobody really believes Catholicism can ever regain power, so a few concessions do not matter. But they mount up. The Roman Catholic Church is a profound believer in Aesop's fable, that if you cannot break a bundle of sticks, you can break each stick separately. And, assessing the measure of each major political party, the Roman hierarchy plays one against the other in pursuance of its own ends.

Why is there no Catholic university in this country? In Eire, as recently as 1961, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin forbade Catholic youth to enter Trinity College under pain of mortal sin. Young men, he said, were "not mature enough to be exposed without danger to the environment of a neutral or Protestant university." Yet although the Catholics have eleven teacher training colleges of their own, they do not seem to share Archbishop McQuaid's fear of the contaminating influence of British universities. Could it be because their chaplaincies give them a foothold from which to proselytise our young intellectuals?

Not that the hierarchy is always out for quality! Examination of the specious arguments of some of the Catholic Enquiry Centre leaflets proves that. But one head, one vote, and in a democracy, so long as more heads are labelled "RC", it does not so much matter what is in them.

Catholic Racism in USA

SPEAKING in New York on April 10th, Edward Keating, liberal Roman Catholic editor of the magazine *Ramparts*, condemned the "racist attitude of most Catholics" in America. There were, he said, segregationist parishes in the South, where Negroes were never allowed to attend the churches of whites and where Negroes were passed by at the Communion rail if they dared to come forward with whites (*Belfast Telegraph*, 10/4/65). Mr. Keating, a convert to Catholicism, also deplored the repressive influence of the authoritarian Irish wing in the American Church. The clergy was, he said, "overwhelmed by the Irish", who had "brought with them their ancient prejudice against anything they don't understand". And the edicts of "Don't eat meat on Friday" and "Go to mass on Sunday" had "greater priority in the Catholic Church than social justice".

We do well to note Mr. Keating's remarks when TV newsreels so often seem to pick out the few brave nuns who are taking part in the American freedom marches.

This Believing World

AS USUAL, the clergy were to the fore on radio and TV at Easter, and the programmes were packed with services, meditations, and sermons about Jesus. We even had that boring play by Dorothy Sayers with its hordes of Jews all yelling for the crucifixion of Jesus, and so on. Miss Sayers's *Man Born to be King* seemed calculated—like the Pope's Passion Sunday sermon—to stir up the latent hatred for Jews which has been characteristic of fervent Christianity, and which the story of a dying God helps to perpetuate.

★

BUT THE *pièce de résistance* on Good Friday evening was a discussion on "Is Britain Pagan?" which for sheer fatuity, TV has not seen since its inception. It was introduced by the popular *Dr. Finlay's Casebook* actor, Andrew Cruickshank, and we shudder to think what he must have thought about it. The three speakers, who included a bishop, vied with each other in seeing who could utter the biggest nonsense, and poor Mr. Cruickshank in his summing up appeared to have forgotten what the subject was about. But all three (needless to say) ended up with Jesus somewhere, without knowing exactly where or why.

★

THE BIGGEST feast for the clergy, however, was provided on Easter Sunday morning at Coventry Cathedral. They numbered *ten*, headed by the Bishop of Coventry, in addition to a reverend commentator, and if *they* couldn't put Jesus back on the map, who possibly could? But it surely makes one think that, after something like nineteen centuries of intensive efforts to make the "Man Born to be King" known here in Britain, he still requires every scrap of publicity that can be got for him on radio and TV.

★

WHETHER there ever was a Queen of Sheba, a favourite of King Solomon, is one of those religious mysteries not yet solved, but they both are claimed to have been in at the beginning of Ethiopia. The faith of Ethiopia's present emperor, Haile Selassie, is rarely put forward these days as a shining example of the power of Jesus, but its Christian history is not at all unlike that of European Christianity—a long record of murder, torture, and bloodshed. Like the priests in early Christianity, the Ethiopian clergy are almost all uneducated, and communion is rarely given, perhaps because its meaning is quite lost. And European Christians don't seem to care very much for their brothers in Christ in Ethiopia, even at Easter?

★

WHY, OH WHY, is there such a big slump in the number of churchgoers? The *Sunday Express* (4/4/65) blames prosperity and "the effect of television immorality"; and Father F. Ripley estimates that "there are now 40 million people in Britain who do not go to church". The humble bicycle, the more aristocratic motor car, and a more or less fat pay packet are all to blame for people neglecting to worship their Saviour in church. And with it, of course, goes the modern laxity in sexual behaviour, stimulated by TV!

★

BUT IN the ultimate Father Ripley blames the fact that "it is easy to demolish a religious conception in a one minute remark, which might take an hour to refute properly". Why though does he not spend his time refuting the objections instead of bemoaning them? Why does he not try his hand at refuting some of the established—and not so momentary—criticisms of Christianity. He could start with Paine's *Age of Reason* which—in 160 years—has so far not been refuted.

Easter

By GEORGE R. GOODMAN

AT Easter we were subjected to the annual intensified barrage of religious clap-trap, particularly over the radio, which calls for a counterblast in the shape of a few sober facts from the works of eminent scholars like Sir James G. Frazer, Gerald Massey, Dr. Alvin Boyd Kuhn, and others.

The directors of religious broadcasts treat the adherents of orthodox denominations as illiterate numskulls who are expected to believe everything that their fairy-tale tapes are droning out morning, noon and night. Veracity is not their strong point. So long as the gullible and superstitious listeners swallow their soporific dope, that is all that matters.

The BBC's directors do not expect criticism, for they argue that those people who listen to these insidious broadcasts would not only be unwilling, but also quite unable to offer any criticism.

Outside every church, special Lent sermons are advertised which, to judge by their titles, become more and more frenzied, as the climax of Easter approaches. Clergymen become quite hot under their dog-collars when tackling such choice subjects as the passion, the crucifixion, the hour of agony and sundry other traditional fantasies.

One would not cavil at these lugubrious Canterbury tales, if only a third of them had a historical basis, but there is not an atom of truth in the whole of these dogmatic taradiddles.

The so-called crucifixion was an annual mummary play and referred to the Sun god who disappeared in the autumn and reappeared at the vernal Equinox in the spring.

The play was a dramatisation of seasonal happenings in nature and was in vogue not only in Egypt, but also in Babylon and many other countries, as described in Frazer's *Golden Bough*. The alleged events in Jerusalem were merely copied, almost word for word, from Egyptian and Babylonian accounts which ante-dated the Gospel accounts by several thousand years. In the third century of our era, the doctrine manufacturers had the impudence to turn good allegory into bad, and quite impossible, "history".

They never expected that we would be able to uncover their pious fraud through the discovery of the Rosetta Stone and the Behistun Rock. The former made it possible to decipher the Egyptian hieroglyphics and we know now that, chiselled into the Temple walls, built by Amen-hotep III in 1700 BC at Luxor, there existed already, as the scenes clearly show, an annunciation, a miraculous conception or incarnation and the birth and adoration of the messianic infant.

In following articles it will be explained that a so-called crucifixion, as alleged by the Church of Rome—or even as alleged recently in these pages by Mr. Paul Winter—cannot possibly have taken place.

HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

Mrs. Susan Budd is writing a history of the National Secular Society and would be very interested to hear from any members who are kind enough to write to her. She is mainly interested in the history of local Secular Societies; in how many members they had, what kind of meetings they held, and what happened to them, etc. She is also looking for the Minute books of any local societies which might have survived, and would be very glad to hear where any might be found. No names, other than those of the leaders, are being quoted, so all information will be strictly confidential. Mrs. Budd asks any members with reminiscences of local societies to write to her at Nuffield College, Oxford.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, May 2nd, 6.45 p.m.: C. J. LAXON, "Britain's Role in World Affairs".

Havering Humanist Society (Harold Wood Social Centre), Tuesday, May 4th, 8 p.m.: TOM DALTON, "Sex and Modern Youth".

North Staffordshire Humanist Group (Cartwright House, Broad Street, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent), Friday, April 30th, 7 p.m.: A meeting.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, May 2nd, 11 a.m.: PROFESSOR D. G. MACRAE, "Some Substitutes for Religion".

Surbiton and Malden & Coombe and Kingston Branches NSS (The White Hart, Kingston Bridge, Hampton Wick), Friday, April 30th, 8 p.m.: A meeting.

Notes and News

NOR all readers—as we remarked a fortnight ago—were likely to agree with Paul Winter's interpretation of "The Trial of Jesus", though it deserved consideration as a scholarly presentation of the historicist case. This week we print the first part of a mythicist "counterblast" by George R. Goodman. And we reprint, for our Views and Opinions, an assessment by L. H. Lehmann, of the Roman Catholic Church's role in the rise of Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany. This is particularly opportune, we believe, in view of the recent banning of Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Representative*, in Rome (with the consequent dispute over the Concordat) and of the publication of Guenther Lewy's *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany*. We also print it as a tribute to Dr. Lehmann, who was among the first to expose the pro-Fascist policy of Popes Pius XI and XII.

★

BORN in Dublin, Leo H. Lehmann was educated at Mungret College, Limerick, and All Hallows, Dublin. In 1918 he entered the University of *Propaganda Fide* in Rome, and he was ordained a priest of the Roman

Catholic Church in St. John Lateran in 1921. He served as a priest in Europe and South Africa and acted as a negotiator at the Vatican in connection with a legal case against the Jesuits. Later Dr. Lehmann went to the USA, to become pastor in Gainesville, Florida, and received his MA from New York University. Leaving the Roman Catholic Church, he was for some time editor of the *Converted Catholic* magazine, now *Christian Heritage*, in which the article first appeared in rather longer form entitled "Lest We Forget".

★

CRITICISED by Father Paul Crane, SJ (2/4/65) for belatedly discovering the threat to academic freedom in Ghana, Conor Cruise O'Brien pointed out (in a letter to the *Guardian*, 14/4/65) that he had consistently defended the autonomy of the University of Ghana, of which he is Vice-Chancellor. And his address to congregation on March 27th this year had "followed logically" on his address the previous year—copies of which were being sent to the *Guardian* and to his Jesuit critic.

★

BUT who was Father Crane to speak? Dr. O'Brien didn't think that the Jesuit order had "made any notable contribution to the development of academic freedom," and he suggested that the Father might some day get round to considering the question of academic freedom a little nearer home—in Ireland. It is "plain to me and a good many other reasonably intelligent people", Dr. O'Brien wrote—using Father Crane's "happy formula"—that "academic freedom in Ireland is limited by an ideological surveillance, in which the Jesuit order plays an important part, in much the same way as other disciplined and dedicated zealots, so far with less success, seek to exercise surveillance over members of the University of Ghana". From his acquaintance with the two institutions, Dr. O'Brien affirmed that it was much harder to get a job in the National University of Ireland "without the approval of the clerical establishment" than it was to get a job at the University of Ghana "without the approval of the Ideological Institute at Winneba". Father Crane (in his rejoinder, 20/4/65) found this criticism of his order "irrelevant and uncalled for". Which saved him the trouble of answering it.

★

ANOTHER Jesuit, Father Charles Boyer, Professor of Philosophy at the Gregorian University in Rome, has warned Protestants that their tendency to admit women as ministers is an "insurmountable obstacle" to Christian unity. "Christ, our Lord," wrote Father Boyer in *L'Osservatore Romano* (reported in the *Guardian*, 17/4/65) "although he was accompanied by saintly women, did not include one of them among his apostles, not even his mother." And St. Paul was, of course, explicit in ordering women to be quiet in "our gatherings". If women were "capable of the sacrament of priesthood," Father Boyer continued, "the Church would not have deprived them of this grace for so many centuries". Those who were working for Christian unity "must remember the doctrine of the Church"; obstacles to unity were "already considerable" and "the priesthood for women would add one more which is insurmountable". In as much as the question was still being debated among the World Council of Churches, "one can hope that a solution favourable to unity will triumph". For "favourable to unity" read "favourable to Catholicism" or—as Father Boyer pointedly has it—to the Church.

Prayer as Displacement Activity

By D. M. CHAPMAN

ASK a schoolboy a question he can't answer and what does he do? He scratches his head. When Hitler was thwarted, what form did his frustration take? He pounced on the nearest defenceless carpet and chewed away at it, and the seemingly composed comedian on TV, what is he up to during his act? He is straightening his tie (which wasn't crooked), scratching his nose (which wasn't itchy), and pulling on his ear (which remains unaltered). Just watch next time!

What about these odd forms of behaviour we've all noticed but have never questioned. Psychologists have been studying this problem for some years and call these apparently useless behavioural patterns, displacement activities. Before analysing this phenomenon, let's take a look at a few more examples.

There are many instance of animals being better fighters on their home territory when it comes to defence; however, suppose two fish meet at the boundary between their respective territories, what happens when they are therefore equally matched? Oddly enough they both show elements from the behaviour pattern concerned with nest-building. Loosely speaking it is as if their fighting instinct was being frustrated and the available energy was shunted over to the quite irrelevant instinct concerned with nest-building. If instinctive patterns are represented in the brain as some kind of circuit of nerve cells, then it is easy to visualise sparking-over of "energy" from a "frustrated" circuit to a neighbouring circuit which is thus activated. Belligerent birds are known to meet at boundaries and either start grooming themselves or else, in other cases, show signs of going to sleep. There are even cases of people having an orgasm during a difficult examination. Here an aspect of sexual behaviour is inappropriately elicited when energy, which should have been used for escaping from this unpleasant situation, is blocked and spills over to a sexual circuit.

Displacement activities are often highly modified and difficult to classify without a detailed study. Sometimes displacement activities are seized upon by natural selection to be used for the animal's benefit, but let's get back to human examples and in order to make our search easier, we should look for the frustrating or tight predicaments which are particularly favourable for finding the associated displacement activities. Consider the ship at sea during a hurricane with the water coming in faster than it can be pumped out, or the hopeless leukaemia case, or the fugitive waiting to be apprehended and crucified by the authorities. What are these unfortunates all doing? Indulging in a displacement activity of course, curled up like fetuses ready for sleep! It looks as if prayer, in the face of a hopeless situation, is essentially a displacement activity involving elements of the behavioural pattern of sleep. Notice the closed eyes, curled up posture and hands held to form a pillow—but displaced.

In church the somnolent state is promoted by the subdued lighting, encouraged by the soporific music and abetted by the repetitious priestly drone. Subdue reason in slumber and even the most rational are assailed by the fantastic shapes and freak notions that rule the kingdom of the subconscious. At the twilight zone of sleep the critical faculties weaken but the imagination freshens and manipulates ideas of miracles, dying gods and virgin mothers with ease. On awakening what is left is a vague remembrance of an emotional experience in which the

unlikely stories told in the cold light of day took on the most convincing reality of all—that of personal experience.

Just imagine what prayer would be like if the energy sparked over to sexual displacement activities! Grotesque as this may seem, I think this happened in ancient Sumer. There was no kneeling or bowing in the religion of this civilisation; instead, one stood up and threw kisses to the gods. The verb "to pray" was even represented by a pictograph of a priest wafting his moist kisses heavenward.

"But," you may ask, "atheists surely have frustrating moments too and yet you don't find them praying?" My answer to this is that atheists simply refuse to pray with the result that they have to use a variety of different displacement activities such as hand-wringing and tearing at one's hair which are both displacement activities concerned with the cleansing and grooming instinct.

One of the troubles with prayer (other than it doesn't work) is that with practice this displacement activity becomes easier and easier to elicit so that instead of doing something about one's problems, the prayerful are prone to indulge in this useless activity.

CATHOLICISM AND FASCISM

(Concluded from page 138)

adjustments and change confederations which had existed for generations before the great [first] world conflict". He went on to say:

The opposition to this adjustment of the German peoples with some of the groups of the old Austrian Empire . . . comes from England and France. These two nations have expressed their bitter resentment over these changes as a disturbance of the "balance of power" in Europe, and are fearful that Germany, in union with a re-united Austria, will place the German peoples in the ascendancy with ample force to maintain the position, and by alliance with Italy, terminate Britain's sole supremacy in the Mediterranean and directly affect its future control of India and Egypt and the African British colonies.

What America is witnessing is the normal reunion of these several parts into the original, living structure. It had to come. It could not be blocked. In justice to the 100 million people in Central Europe, why should anyone try to prevent it?

This same Justice Herbert O'Brien was one of Father Coughlin's staunchest supporters.

In his book, *Church and State in Germany*, which was widely distributed in the USA by the German Library of Information, Frederick F. Schrader reproduced the official text of the Vatican-Hitler Concordat and quoted the conclusion of a review of it from *Germania*, most influential Catholic newspaper in Germany, as follows: "It was reserved for the constellation of Adolf Hitler, Franz von Papen, and Cardinal Pacelli to renew the old bonds between the Reich and the Church."

This Vatican-Hitler Concordat was the first overall agreement between the Roman Catholic Church and Germany for over 100 years. These bonds could not have been renewed if a democratic government had been in power in Germany, since they tied together an authoritarian State and an authoritarian Church.

Franz von Papen, co-signer with Pope Pius XII of the Vatican's Concordat with Hitler's Reich, summed up the Vatican-Hitler policies as follows (*Der Voelkischer Beobachter*, January 14th, 1934): "The Third Reich is the first power which not only recognises, but puts into practice, the high principles of the papacy."

Burns (even at his bawdiest) is not for Burning

By MICHAEL FOOT

POOR Fanny Hill, I see, was dragged before the magistrates again the other day and compelled to suffer the renewed indignity of vainly defending her shady reputation. Over the past few years there has been a fresh censorious nip in the literary air. Who will be the next famous victim?

One candidate is Robert Burns. Yes, *the* Robert Burns, the glorious, the beloved, the immortal. Such a suggestion may sound absurd or outrageous, but consider the case and the contents of *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*, of which a new edition has recently been published (W. H. Allen, 30s.).

The book has a fascinating and sinister history.

Several of his closest friends knew in his lifetime that Robert Burns was making a collection of Scottish bawdy songs, to which he contributed his own permutations and original verses. He circulated them in manuscript, and wrote an oft-quoted letter to Robert Cleghorn, thus: "There is, there must be, some truth in original sin.—My violent propensity to B—dy convinces me of it.—Lack a day! if that species of composition be the sin against 'the Haly Ghaist,' I am the most offending soul alive."

When he died in 1796—on the very night, according to one tradition—the collection disappeared. No one knows what happened to it. One tale was that Burns on his death-bed had rejected an offer to sell it for £50.

What is known is that in the year 1800 a little scruffy anonymous volume with the present title was published. The assumption grew that Burns was the author, and since his fame was already immense, it might be thought that copies of such a suggestive, saleable work would be numerous. In fact the horrified 19th century destroyed them all—except one.

That precious, priceless treasure, now in the library of Lord Rosebery, was used by some infamous editors in the early years of the 20th century as the basis for a bowdlerised edition. They thought they could do the job better than Burns, and their ridiculous emendations still appear scrawled across the text.

The world had to wait until 1959 for a scrupulous scholarly reissue of the *Merry Muses* of 1800. (This 1964 edition contains a new preface with some slight additional information.) And, again, it must be insisted that no one knows exactly how much even of this volume is accurate or authentic.

Somewhere in some forgotten cellar Burns's original notebook in his own hand may still be awaiting discovery. Or perhaps decades ago—lack a day! as Burns himself would say—some insufferable prude, some snivelling vandal, some self-appointed inquisitor consigned those joyous, juicy, irreplaceable pages to the flames.

Meantime, the rest of us must make do with what we've got; we must be grateful for large mercies. What was good enough for Walt Whitman should be good enough for anyone, and he, prompted by the *Merry Muses* in particular, sang the praises of Burns as "almost the tenderest manliest, and [even if contradictory] dearest, flesh-and-blood figure in all the streams and clusters of by-gone poets." Who now will quarrel with such a verdict? Who will presume to ban Burns today, especially when we are assured in this introduction by eminent American professors that Scottish bawdy, and especially Burns's contribution to it, "is extremely frank—and fundamentally humorous and hence humanistic. It is extremely vigorous and, if it can be said to smell, it smells on the whole like the

not unpleasant smell of horse droppings. It reeks of the stable rather than the urinal. To certain olfactory organs it gives the effect of new-mown hay."

But why need we cite further authorities, call more witnesses? Let the reader judge for himself.

And let no fastidious Anglo-Saxon be deterred by the Scots dialect which hitherto may have hindered his appreciation. It is Burns the man as much as Burns the poet who has conquered the world, and the odour of this book is part of him.

Despite four-letter words and all other scandalous features, magistrates should lose no sleep. I trust they will leave the business of censorship to less fallible creatures, say to Burns's Haly Ghaist.

[Reprinted from the *Evening Standard*, 16/2/65.]

Philosophy of Science—Some Facets

By DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

6—NATURAL LAW AND HUMAN FREEDOM

THE old controversy "Determinism v Freewill" comes tumbling out of almost any discussion of cause and effect.

Determinism maintains that everything that happens has a cause, sometimes known and sometimes unknown; every event is a link in an unbroken chain of cause and effect. This is the basic attitude of scientific investigation.

An indeterminist, on the other hand, will deny that everything has a cause and believes that there are breaks in the causal chain. This is a difficult doctrine to defend: no event can be positively shown to be uncaused; a determinist can always say that "one day a cause will be found".

Determinist doctrine has always been feared by believers in freewill and human responsibility. Their fear, that determinism implies that people are not responsible for their actions, is understandable but probably unjustified. Determinism need not deny human freedom; the opposite of "free" is not "determined" but "compelled".

In an earlier article in this series it was suggested that the laws of nature were descriptive only; they do not compel. The fact that man cannot act in opposition to the laws of physics and chemistry does not imply that choice of action within the limitations of those laws is impossible. Many alternative actions are physically and chemically possible. When the laws of human psychology have been properly formulated in a scientific manner—the task has hardly begun—a similar relationship to alternative actions may be found.

Approaching the problem from another direction it must be pointed out that if an event is uncaused, if it occurs outside a causal series then it is a random event, a chance occurrence. Do those who link freewill with uncaused events really wish to say that free choices are random choices? A man acting on the basis of random events could hardly be held responsible for his acts. Some moralists have attached an exaggerated importance to the so-called indeterminacies in quantum physics. It is perhaps unwise of them.

The whole argument between freewill and determinism has yet to be finally resolved. But at least the time has passed when it was assumed that "freedom" and "natural law" were exclusive and opposite concepts.

Musings

Genealogist Wanted

God's grandmother (on his mother's side)
Was Anne (Saint Anne to you).
But who his maternal grandfather was
I haven't got a clue.

In Whose Image?

Christians continue to deny
That God was made by man
But now that our fathers try
To be as "human" as they can
It will be interesting to note
What changes in the Deity
(According to the Church) denote
The new style in paternity . . .
(For cruel men have cruel gods)
Did God make Man or . . .
What's the odds?

Hypocrisy (with apologies to Butler)

Hypocrisy (said Butler) well
May serve the Church as much as zeal.
The sects that make the biggest splash
Today are those with all the cash,
This is to prove to modern youth
That wealth is inseparable from Truth.

Hell (R.C.)

The worm and I (the heretic)
Face permanent torture in hell.
The thought of it just makes me sick
(And it's bad luck on the worm as well).

God

God sent a message to a priest—
"I do not want to be deceased"
The priest said, "All we have to do
Is to go on making doubt taboo".

Cremation (RC)

Cremation is an un-Catholic
Way to set out for eternity.
If Mother Church can't do the burning
Then she'll leave it to the Deity.

Saint or Sinner?

Considering how by God's own plan
(And treachery) he saved mankind,
Judas should surely be a saint?
He aint.

Creation

To insist on a "beginning"
Is a favourite Christian whim
And of course it's considered sinning
To ask "who created Him?"

Christian Tolerance

At least Jesus didn't tell
The woman of Samaria to go to hell
(He only wished those people dead
Who disagreed with what he said).

K.M.

CORRECTION

Peter Cotes, a friend of the deceased, has pointed out two mistakes in our obituary of F. A. Hornibrook (9/4/65). Mr. Hornibrook was not 89 at the time of his death, but 88; and his autobiography was entitled *Without Reserve* not *Without Fear or Favour*, the latter being a collection of essays and reminiscences.

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE AGNOSTIC

The remarks in my article "Does God Exist", to which Mr. E. Markley objects (2/4/65), were written in good humour and were not intended to suggest that agnostics are active comfort seekers.

The agnostic position is usually reached at the end of a long and uncomfortable intellectual journey—this I know—but at the end of the journey it is, I still believe, easy for agnosticism to become less a search for truth than a state of permanent and apathetic indecision. The agnostic who resists this temptation (and from his reaction Mr. Markley seems to be one) is not to be envied—he sits on a razor's edge instead of a fence.

DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

BLASPHEMY

A Finnish court is at present hearing a blasphemy charge against publisher and author of (now bestselling) *Midsummer Night's Dance*. There is no question about the technical guilt of the author, Hannu Salama, for he has written to the court admitting deliberate "blasphemy" and announcing his intention of repeating the "offence". It is now being put about that he must be mentally unstable, on the grounds that while anyone might be expected to blaspheme nobody but a lunatic could be expected to admit it.

The law under which the Minister of Justice was compelled to take action dates from 1889 and has not been invoked, according to informed Finnish sources in London, since the beginning of the century. On this occasion pressure was brought to bear by a group of people led by a strong churchwoman member of the Finnish parliament and a bishop of the Established Lutheran Church. Their target was until recently unknown and seemingly powerless. Though many citizens deplore this pernicious attack on free speech in the arts, the fact remains that a repressive statute is still law. The case will be heard without a jury and the maximum sentence on conviction is four years' imprisonment.

Vast numbers of people in Great Britain will applaud Mr. Salama's statement, "My main purpose was to undermine the authority of the Church and the Christian faith". They have observed the activities of small pressure groups, acting as self-appointed custodians of public morality, in their onslaught on "disbelief, doubt and dirt" and other emotive national bogies. But many citizens would be surprised to hear that on our Statute Book is legislation equally savage, if not that we too have an Established Church and reactionary bishops and parliamentarians.

Our 1697-8 Blasphemy Act, also thought to be obsolete, is the theoretical cornerstone of a system which uses legal sanctions to uphold the incredible Christian theology and the repressive sociology and sexology based thereon. It is not concerned with urbanity of expression, but with the fact that "many persons have of late years openly avowed and published many blasphemous and impious opinions contrary to the doctrines and principles of the Christian religion greatly tending to the dishonour of Almighty God". It is an offence to "by writing printing teaching or advised speaking . . . deny the Christian religion to be true or the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be of divine authority". For a second offence the penalty is permanent loss of all civil or military office and citizenship rights, together with three years' imprisonment. It seems unlikely that anyone today would be prosecuted under this infamous statute. But that's what they thought in Finland . . .

DAVID TRIBE,

President, National Secular Society

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In an interview given not long ago in Rome, Cardinal Bea, SJ, of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (founded by the late Pope John), assured a visiting Anglican cleric that, "the Counter-Reformation is now definitely finished". More generally, that specific era in the evolution of Catholicism which began when the Reformation forced Rome back on the defensive has now come to an end, to be succeeded presumably by an era of Christian reunion. The Second Vatican Council will doubtless play the same sort of role in relation to ecumenism as the Council of Trent played in the initiation of the Counter-Reformation in the mid-16th century.

It is nowadays generally admitted, not only by critical scholars but by most Roman Catholic scholars themselves, that the Reformation, initiated by Martin Luther in 1517, constitutes, as it were, a deep water-shed that historically, sharply sunders the medieval Church from the Catholicism of modern (post-Reformation) times. For what, in effect, the Protestant revolution—and it was a revolution in the current context of its own era—did, was to force the Church of Rome back on to the defensive. Thenceforth, the "Universal" Church had to resign itself to being no longer universal, something to be simply taken for granted, as it had been in the Middle Ages, but was continually forced to justify itself against Protestant, and in time, rationalist critiques.

The Jesuits

From the Council of Trent—or perhaps more accurately, from the inception of the Jesuits (1540), right down to the present Vatican Council, a period of about four centuries, the prevailing type of Catholicism has been (as I once defined it elsewhere) "the Catholicism of a state of siege". Modern Catholicism has been increasingly centralised under an ultramontane papal autocracy that received its official stamp by the declaration of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council in 1870. A leading part—often indeed the leading part—in this ecclesiastical counter-revolution was played through this post-Tridentine era by the militarily organised Society of Jesus, the Praetorian Guard or, to employ a more modern analogy, the SS men of the modern Church of Rome. Throughout this whole era, the Church was organised on primarily defensive lines in order to meet the Protestant attack initiated by Luther, Calvin, *et al.*

The New Counter-Reformation

Such were the primary characteristics of the Counter-Reformation (perhaps counter-revolution would be the more precise term since its cultural, and even political aspects far transcended the purely religious sphere) that may be said to have lasted right down to the inception of Pope John's "papal revolution" and its resulting ecumenical movement. Now we apparently have the assurance of Pope John's right-hand man (and a Jesuit!), Cardinal Bea, that this long era is over.

What precisely, does the Cardinal mean? We suggest that, as another former dignitary of Holy Church (Talley-

rand) once suggested, "Words were made to conceal thought". For what his Jesuitical Eminence seemed really to have meant was, not that the old Counter-Reformation was finished, but that a *new* one has now begun; a contemporary counter-revolution no longer (as in the 16th century) primarily directed against Protestantism—now "our separated brethren"—but against the scientific revolution of the 20th century, and against atheism, its philosophical culmination.

This new Counter-Reformation will need an entirely new strategic approach, an approach which, as Pope John and Cardinal Bea realised, will require both different methods and different allies from those which passed

muster in the days of the Inquisition and of St. Ignatius Loyola. For it is no longer a mere internal theological controversy between Catholic and non-Roman interpretations of Christianity, but a final back-to-the-wall stand of all the Churches—and in time perhaps, all the gods—against the common menace of atheism, which threatens them all with universal extinction. Obviously a radical revision of earlier tactics is needed; for to present such a united front against atheism, allies must be sought—and found! Hence the ecumenical movement and the unprecedented official recognition of atheism as a serious subject for study, and no longer as always formerly in Catholic theology, a mere lunatic aberration. Today, in fact, Rome in her "infallible" wisdom makes her own the wordly-wise epigram of that Protestant cynic, Lord Melbourne: "For God's sake gentlemen, let us all hang together, since otherwise we shall all hang separately".

This (in quite non-ecclesiastical language) represents the advice now shouted by Rome from the houseposts to "our separated brethren" the non-Roman Churches—and in time no doubt to the—shall we say?—separated gods of the non-Christian cults. The universal Church is at present seeking to put herself at the head of a universal "Counter-Reformation".

Rome's Last Stand

Critical writers (including the present one) are sometimes accused of overestimating the strength of what is undoubtedly today, the major enemy of all forms of humanism, the Church of Rome. One should not of course do this any more than Rome herself does. For actions speak louder than words and it is today quite evident from their actions (even more than from their words), that Cardinal Bea and the backroom boys of the Vatican who really run the Church behind the facade of papal infallibility, have no illusions about their situation, which is grimmer and more critical than were any of the numerous crises that have so often occurred in the chequered and stormy annals of the Church of Rome: far more so even than was the Reformation itself. For Rome and religion today, fight for their very lives. Rome now falls back on her "Maginot Line", her *ne plus ultra*. Her new Counter-Reformation must be her last, for the Vatican has no further reserves to draw on!

VIEWS AND OPINIONS
*The New
Counter-Reformation*
By F. A. RIDLEY

The SPR and Sir William Crookes

By H. CUTNER

THROUGH the kindness of a friend, I have had the opportunity of reading *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* for March, 1964. This is mostly a highly detailed investigation into Trevor Hall's *The Spiritualists*—an inquiry into the mediumship of Florence Cook and her relationship to Sir William Crookes. The *Proceedings*, over 180 pages, has an excellent index, and a chronology which provides very useful information at a glance. The two authors, are Mr. R. G. Medhurst and Mrs. K. M. Goldney, and their object appears to be a kind of "rehabilitation" of Crookes, in which I am obliged to say that, as far as I am concerned they have completely failed. (I do not intend to deal with the problem as to whether he had or had not an "affair" with Florence Cook.)

My own opinion, based on a good deal of hard reading, long before Mr. Hall's book appeared, is that, like so many eminent men and women of the period—about 90 years ago—Crookes was completely bamboozled by a not particularly intelligent girl who saw in this middle-aged scientist an old fool ripe for plucking. When she tried to hoax her own kind, that is, other mediums, she was easily caught in fraud. They knew all the tricks of the trade, and Crookes did not.

But exactly where the authors of the *Proceedings* stand, I have failed to find out. That is, they appear to believe in spiritualistic phenomena when it suits them, and are ready to throw the spirits out when it doesn't.

At the very outset, we are told that "we owe a debt of gratitude" to Mr. Hall's book because he "redirected our attention to the difficult problem of the evidential status of the physical phenomena produced so copiously by the nineteenth century mediums". Well, I have read a good deal about this "phenomena", and long ago found it was brazen fraud. Pretty nearly all the mediums were found out to be frauds, and the only reason for their success was that the believers had no more idea of asking for proof than the average Christian layman. The Victorian who accepted D. D. Home, Florence Cook, Mrs. Guppy, Dr. Slade, Miss Showers, and a host of similar mediums represent exactly the same credulity and ignorance as do the defenders of the Gospel miracles.

We are told in the *Proceedings* that Trevor Hall deserves our thanks because he acquainted us "with some of the more remarkable (and occasionally suspicious) details of Florence Cook's mediumistic career". I am sure that Florence's career was indeed "remarkable" for I doubt if any other medium had ever so thoroughly and successfully duped a noted man of science as she did Crookes. But perhaps not altogether successfully; for there were moments when Crookes had a few teeny-weeny doubts. When he believed everything without question, he was able to describe a seance in the following glowing terms:—

Katie [Katie King who was "materialised" by Florence Cook] never appeared to greater perfection, and for nearly two hours she walked about the room conversing familiarly with those present. On several occasions she took my arm . . . I asked her permission to clasp her in my arms, so as to be able to verify the interesting observations which a bold experimentalist has recently verbosely recorded. Permission was graciously given, and I accordingly did—well, as any gentleman would under the circumstances. (*The Spiritualist*, April 8th, 1874.)

What better proof could Crookes have had than embracing, like a true gentleman, the warm responsive body of a young girl, especially as he was quite sure it was a spirit?

On the other hand, this mood of joyous assurance

must have sadly disappeared later when, in a letter published in *Light* in 1900 (though written in 1874), he said he had found "no satisfactory proof that the dead can return and communicate". Of course, Crookes later insisted without evidence, that his spiritualism was true—and he elicited photography in support. He photographed Florence with and without Katie, and a few of the surviving photographs appear in the *Proceedings*. No doubt for some of them, Florence had a confederate easily spoofing Crookes in the dark. As Podmore in his *Modern Spiritualism* says about the photographs of Florence and Katie, "The likeness between the two sets is unmistakable. Nor is it possible to substantiate any real difference." The reproductions in the *Proceedings* prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the medium and the spirit were one and the same, except when Florence was obliged to have a confederate.

The *Proceedings* should have made a clear and unequivocal declaration whether they considered Crookes to have been duped by Florence Cook and her associates, and whether her materialisations were or were not authentic.

Even D. D. Home told Flammarion (*Mysterious Psychic Forces*, Boston, 1907) that the phenomena of Florence Cook was based "on skilled trickery". Flammarion says:—

The medium Home, employed, as we have seen, in the first experiments of Professor Crookes, gave it to me as his personal opinion that Miss Cook was only a skilful trickster, and had shamefully deceived the eminent scientist; and as for mediums, why there was only one absolutely trustworthy and that was himself, Daniel Dunglas Home!

All the other mediums then existing were "absolutely untrustworthy".

Those who found Trevor Hall's book fascinating, will also find the *Proceedings* almost as fascinating; but unless one is familiar with the history of spiritualism it is in many ways confusing. I think I am right in saying that the verdict on Florence Cook and on Crookes himself is lost in a maze of words on other people.

Without in any way dealing with this case, there is one book which it is a pity has been allowed to go out of print, and which, in my opinion, is perhaps the most devastating exposure of spiritualism ever written. It had long ago been destroyed by Spiritualists in America except for a copy or two, and was reprinted in 1922 by Dr. E. J. Dingwall and Harry Price who made a specially fine job in editing it. I cannot see how it is possible to believe in spirits after one has read *Revelations of a Spirit Medium*. The author has remained anonymous, and unfortunately very few people appear to have heard of his exciting work. Neither Joseph F. Rinn nor Harry Houdini referred to it when, in their time, they demolished so much "genuine" spiritualism.

Finally, if there are any Spiritualists left who believe in materialisations and spirit photography, where are they? Why has no one yet materialised Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Oliver Lodge, or even Hannen Swaffer? Surely they would be only too glad to come alive once again to confound the sceptics!

WITHOUT COMMENT

People seem very dubious about what these statements mean, and some people even wonder if they mean anything that really connects with life at all.—Peter Hamilton on *Songs of Praise* (*Radio Times*, 15/4/65).

Easter (2)

By GEORGE R. GOODMAN

If one were to ask a clergyman about the alleged crucifixion of a so-called saviour, he would point to the Bible and would, with a mien that brooked no contradiction, assert that the various accounts in the New Testament were "Gospel truth". So let us for a moment assume that the events described there were really factual. But then, unexpected difficulties immediately arise, if a long series of symbolic "happenings" have to be compressed into *actual* time.

Mythical depiction requires only hypothetical time, whereas history demands measured duration or clock time. And Jesus must have had a far busier Maundy night than any buzzing American business tycoon or any British Prime Minister on a flying visit to Washington.

All festivals in every religion always have a solar, lunar or stellar basis and all references to so-called historical events or personalities are merely ecclesiastical accretions of a fanciful nature. The Jewish Passover night is always on the 14th of Nisan, which is the first full moon after the vernal equinox—which, in turn, determines the festival of Easter, immaterial whether that is the Christian or pagan Easter.

According to the Jewish Passover ritual, the bone of a lamb has to be on the table and rabbinical explanation is that it is in memory of the Paschal lamb which was slain when the Israelites were in Egypt and whose blood was used to paint the doorposts of their dwellings so that when the final and most decisive of the ten plagues was inflicted upon the Egyptians, namely the slaying of the Egyptian first-born sons, "the angel of the Lord would know where there was an Israelitic family and step over that house and not kill any first-born in it."

After this carnage, the Egyptians told the Israelites to get out as quickly as possible, with the result that they had not time to allow the yeast to raise the flour and they had to take unleavened bread on their journey. Hence, to this day, Jewish people eat *matzos* or unleavened bread for seven days and are not allowed to have ordinary bread or anything that goes through a process of fermentation in the house.

The most interesting thing is that the Roman Catholic Church also adopted the unleavened bread idea, but called it the "host" which, by a mystical process, became the body of Christ and is, of course, very holy. So much so that in Catholic countries, not so very long ago, when the host was carried through the streets, non-Catholics were obliged to fall on their knees, or if indoors, to draw their curtains. Non-compliance with this order invoked severe maltreatment.

The Paschal lamb had originally nothing to do with an animal, but was emblematical of the astrological sign Aries, because at that period the sun stood in the sign of Aries. In short, it was the Age of Aries, preceding the Age of Pisces which was the typical "Christian" Age. This will be more fully explained in a further article.

But let us come back to the "Last Supper" so magnificently portrayed by Leonardo da Vinci as a mural (Milan, 1494-98).

The Jewish Passover feast begins at sundown and the service and reading from a special book at home plus a long ceremonial, eating and singing would bring the time up to about 11 o'clock. Then there was the walk out to Mount of Olives, and return; by that time it would have been past midnight.

Then the switch of scene to Gethsemane and the detailed series of incidents there. Long agony and sweat, chiding of the disciples for falling asleep, arrest by a special guard, cutting off and healing of the ear of the centurion's servant.

What knocks the bottom out of the whole tale are *three separate and distinct court trials*, involving the presence of officials, the procurator, the Sanhedrin, and the masses—all in the late hours of the stillness of an oriental night!

To accept all that as history, is indeed asking us to swallow a camel! The Bible fabricators certainly overreached themselves and their pious fraud was made obvious when the Egyptian hieroglyphics were deciphered and the Babylonian tablets translated.

Unfortunately for the Bible thumpers, it transpired that the story was already 2,000 years old before the alleged events in Judaea—that Egypt had already this dramatic play yearly enacted, portraying the Sungod's disappearance at the autumnal equinox and his return at the vernal equinox.

One little item which the Bible falsifiers never dreamed would be discovered are the "two thieves" that were "crucified" together with the Sungod. Their names were Anup and Aan. (Ask any clergyman whether he can tell you the names of the two thieves!) And why were they punished: Because these wicked fellows were accused of "stealing the light of the Sungod".

Egypt had long known a Jesus, Iusa, who had been born amidst celestial portents of an immaculate parent-hood, circumcised, baptised, tempted, glorified on the mount, persecuted, arrested, tried, condemned, crucified, buried, resurrected and elevated to heaven.

Egypt had listened to a sermon on the mount and the sayings of Iusa for ages. Egypt had known a Jesus who antedated the Gospel Messiah by 2,000 to 5,000 years and presents the investigator with 180 items of identity, similarity and correspondence in word, deed and function with his later copy.

But Egypt's Christ was not a living person. It would have been equally fatal to Christianity if he had been. But the fact of his non-historicity rises now out of the past that priestcraft had thought it had sealed in oblivion for ever, to strike the death-knell of a false and spurious religion.

The Gospels' "life" of Jesus turns out to be nothing but the garbled and fragmentary copy of an Egyptian prototype who never lived, but was a purely typical dramatic figure, portraying the highest degree of ethical excellence. With this revelation of lost truth, the structure of historical Christianity topples to the ground.

But even in that far-from-holy Bible there are three different accounts of Jesus's death. One that he was "crucified" which we have seen was incorrect, for there were already 16 other "Christs" in different nations whose birth, life and death coincided with the one that Christianity espoused. Then there is the account in the Acts that he was "hung on a tree". And lastly, we have the verse in Revelation that Jesus was crucified in Egypt. Does that mean half a crucifixion in Judaea and the other half in Egypt? But then, Christian apologists are not of a critical nature, their main characteristic is credulity.

Assyria and Babylon, Greece and India, China and Mexico, all had their mystical Christs who were connected with sun-worship as will be further explained in a subsequent article.

This Believing World

ONE hundred and seventy years after Paine published his *Age of Reason*, we still find Christians all over the world who believe in the story of Jonah and the whale. Not all Christians of course, for the Rev. G. Byers of St. Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey (*South London Press*, 16/4/65), is one who courageously disbelieves it in the face of the account given to mankind by God in His Precious Word. Even the fact that Jesus was in the tomb for three days just as Jonah was inside the whale for three days is for him no proof that it ever occurred.

★

MR. BYERS found that a "group of pupils at a local school" had already thrown overboard the world-famous story, and were quite surprised to discover he did not believe it either! The class later learnt that "many Biblical stories are not 'Gospel' ". Yet the story of Jonah and other silly stories in the Bible are taught to schoolchildren under the agreed syllabus.

★

OBVIOUSLY, the very greatest film ever made or possible to be made would have to be about Jesus, and cinemagoers will no doubt flock in their millions to see *The Greatest Story Ever Told* on the screen. Yet, in spite of its divine hero, the film has long patches of sheer boredom. One of the painful counts against Heaven as a perpetual home for Christians is the fact that all the Biblical heroes there are *bored*, and not even the most enthusiastic Christian would be able to stand more than a week or so of them.

★

THOSE WHO "like the Good Word served up with the flourish of Barnum and Bailey, and the celestial saccharin of Cecil B. de Mille, will flock to this epic in their multitudes" said David Zec, in the *Daily Mirror* (8/4/65) but "it is a movie aimed at cash customers not converts". In fact, Mr. Zec frankly confessed that "sermons in Cinerama, stereophonic angels, the lacquered hair styles, and the heavenly Hallelulahs, move me not at all". And he was glad we were spared a shot of Jesus "walking on water"—surely the most marvellous miracle in the history of miracles! But Mr. Zec is far more contemptuous than these quotations show.

★

WE USED to be referred to the huge number of Christians in the world as proof of its terrific influence, and now the Bishop of Guildford tells us that "Christianity is a minority religion". This after nearly 1900 years of the Bible and Jesus, literally forced on us by law. Dr. Rein-dorp will have to invent better excuses for the failure of Christianity than he does in the *Sunday Mirror* (18/4/65). What about the deadliest attack on his religion of all—that it is not true?

★

ACCORDING to the *Daily Mail* (17/4/65) there is going to be tough opposition by Roman Catholics at the Council of Europe in May, to "a British proposal to promote family planning on a world scale." So far, the "anti-birth control countries have lost the first round", but religious feeling in Roman Catholic countries is still hotly opposed to reducing the birth rate in underdeveloped countries.

★

GERDA L. COHEN, writing on religion in English schools (*New Statesman*, 23/4/65) reported that in one London borough alone, there were 600 vacancies in county primary schools scattered over a wide area. If the local education authority succumbed to "clerical apologetics" and built a Roman Catholic school, vacancies would go up to 880. "The archdiocese concerned, while frankly acknowledging

this, contend that Catholic parents are also ratepayers entitled to their legal rights". Our "hotch-potch" system has, as Mrs. Cohen said, "been the making of Roman Catholic education". But she thought it "could well be the breaking of it". For, while the "pagan taxpayer" might have "no strong aversion to shoring up the poor old C of E, he might conceivably object to financing popish propaganda". We hope Mrs. Cohen hasn't underestimated the apathy of our "pagan taxpayer".

★

FINALLY, good news for Roman Catholics from an American archdiocese—that of Chicago. The faithful have, we learn from the *Guardian* (22/4/65) been granted dispensation to eat meat on Fridays if they are travelling on trains in the United States.

Philosophy of Science—Some Facets

7—FINAL CAUSE

By DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

THE factor contributing most to the progress of science since the Renaissance has been the elimination of any consideration of "final cause" from scientific work. In other words, the working scientist assumes that present events are fully determined by past events and that no consideration of future events or "purposes" is necessary.

Whether or not this rigid exclusion of any reference to future purposes will be as successful in the now developing biological sciences as it has been for physics remains to be seen. At present it is in the philosophy of science, as it expands into metaphysics, that the lack of reference to final causes is apparent.

The meaning of "final causes" must at this stage, be made clear. What is not meant—what would indeed be nonsense—is that some future event not yet existing can influence the world here and now. All that "final cause" can be allowed to mean is that human beings and other organisms have the ability consciously or unconsciously, to control the physical activity of their bodies in anticipation of some state of affairs which they are striving to bring about.

Because it is not interested in final causes science can enumerate all the co-ordinated forces that cause our trains to run but at the same time, can ignore the co-ordinating factor—the men with their eyes on the timetables.

The metaphysical philosopher cannot ignore final causes in this way: they are so integral a part of biological activity that they must be included in any adequate general view of the world.

An interesting problem then arises. At what stage in the evolution of matter do final causes begin to operate? In his philosophical system A. N. Whitehead outflanks the problem by allowing all matter—even elementary particles—some degree of final causation.

This approach has been criticised because the degree of self regulation in a particle must be so rudimentary as to be unverifiable.

But perhaps Occam's Razor can be brought to Whitehead's defence. The material of which we have the most intimate knowledge—the material in our bodies—is certainly linked to subjective decisions about the future. The physicist's inert matter—matter with no subjective aspect—is a different class of entity; a class of which we have no direct knowledge.

Unless such an entity leads to a great simplification of theory, Occam would certainly disapprove. Such a simplification is far from being proved.

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INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, May 9th, 11 a.m.: RICHARD CLEMENTS, "Asia in Revolt".

Surbiton and Malden & Coombe and Kingston Branches NSS The White Hart, Kingston Bridge, Hampton Wick), Friday, May 7th, 8 p.m.: A Meeting.

Notes and News

THE Israeli newspaper, *Maariv* has described Pope Paul as a "faithful heir to his teacher, Pope Pius XII, who did not lift a finger to save the Jews during the Second World War", and as a spokesman for the "Curia-Conservative reactionary circles in control at the Vatican". But Vatican officials are "expressing surprise and regret" (according to the *Catholic Herald*, 16/4/65) that the Pope's now notorious Passion Sunday sermon should have been "misunderstood" and "misrepresented". He did no more, they argue, than "use the traditional Gospel story of the rejection of Christ by the people of his time, as an example of what is going on among peoples everywhere in the world today". What the Pope said was: "Just at the right moment a people predestined to await the Messiah not only did not recognise Him, but fought Him abused Him and finally killed Him". That is indeed, the "traditional" Gospel story and it is hard to see, in the light of it, how there can be any real reconciliation between the Christians and the Jews.

NOR is it easy to imagine any satisfactory "bridge" between Rome and atheism, such as the Secretariat for Relations with Non-believers envisages. "Peace through dialogue," Cardinal Koenig's declared aim, may sound very commendable, but what peace can there be when each believes the other to be a danger to mankind? The Church, the Cardinal has said (*Catholic Herald*, 16/4/65), "does not wish to organise a fight against atheism, but rather to uncover all possible ways of safeguarding the religious

life in a modern world". These are, we suggest, the words of one who bargains from weakness. "We have nothing against the peoples living under materialist regimes," Cardinal Koenig once said, "... for even materialists are our brothers who have fallen into error ... whom we love and for whom we pray in the hope that one day their eyes might be opened."

★

RECENT surveys on bigotry in England and America—we learn from the same issue of the *Catholic Herald*—show that religious people tend to be less humanitarian, tolerant or at peace with themselves than non-religious. Dr. Milton Rokeach, Professor of Psychology at Michigan State University cited British and American sociological and psychological studies to show that: churchgoers had more punitive attitudes towards criminals, delinquents, prostitutes, homosexuals and psychiatric cases than had non-believers; they expressed more intolerance towards other racial and ethnic groups.

★

THE authoritarian nature of Catholicism was stressed in an Easter sermon by the new Florentine Cardinal, Archbishop Florit. "Obedience to authority is a moral obligation," he said (*The Guardian*, 22/4/65). Obedience to what was taught and commanded by the "Sacred Hierarchy" was a condition for "being faithful to Christ's religion and for participating in all that God has done for the salvation of man."

★

DR. HENRY MORGANTALER, President of the Quebec Committee for Neutral Schools, has announced that his English-speaking group will work in "cordial but unofficial co-operation" with Le Mouvement Laic de Langue Française, established four years ago to promote non-confessional French schools in the province (*The Montreal Star*, 14/4/65). There is, however, a difference in attitude between the two groups. The French organisation would be content with a neutral system set up alongside the existing Roman Catholic system, whereas the English committee wants a single, neutral, English educational system.

★

A YOUNG Anglican chaplain at McGill University, the Rev. Paul Gibson, told the Committee for Neutral Schools that agnostics or non-Protestants were at present excluded from teaching in Quebec's Protestant schools unless they resorted to the "hypocrisy and dishonesty" of swearing that they belonged to a Protestant denomination.

★

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION is to be congratulated on allowing a straightforward half-hour's "confrontation" between an Atheist and a Christian in *Sunday Break* on April 25th. David Tribe, President of the National Secular Society, and Methodist Dr. Donald Soper argued seriously about Easter, without any chairman and without any loss of temper. Of course they sometimes interrupted or spoke together, but this happens in chaired discussions too. And each was determined enough to hold the floor long enough to make his point. Certainly nobody could complain of dullness.

★

OUR only complaint, in fact, is against Dr. Soper's occasional recourse (when cornered?) to superciliousness: dubbing an argument "adolescent", for instance, or advising Mr. Tribe to reread the New Testament. Silliest of all was the "That's-nineteenth-century-materialism" retort when Mr. Tribe insisted that we have no experience of "personalities" detached from bodies. But, we repeat, a worthwhile discussion—the first, we hope, of many.

Points from New Books

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

VICTOR NEUBURG felt that to believe in God was to believe in a Supreme Tyrant, although he found, when he was seduced by "The Great Beast", that "he had no objection against hierarchies of Masters and Gods evolved from within the universe." Jean Overton Fuller, his biographer, writes, in *The Magical Dilemma of Victor Neuburg* (W. H. Allen, 42s.): "I remember Vicky's saying once . . . that it was 'while wallking down a dusty road in South London' that he saw in the window of a shop 'a little paper that changed my entire life.' I thought he was going to say something occult, but his next words were 'THE FREETHINKER'."

Miss Fuller surveys the contributions which Neuburg made to this journal. His first was to the issue of October 25th, 1903, and it was a poem entitled:

Vale Jehovah!

What if to the Race I was born?
To me that's no reason why I
Should cling to a faith that I scorn,
When my birthright's the infinite sky!

Thy yoke I for ever throw over!

Encouraged, Neuburg also began to contribute poems to *The Agnostic Review*, and indeed he might have become the editor of this paper had he not met Aleister Crowley.

Yet even after Crowley had cast his spell, THE FREETHINKER played an important role in Neuburg's life. It was because Hayter Preston was a contributor to the journal that G. W. Foote introduced him to Neuburg; and this meeting encouraged Preston, when he became literary editor of the *Sunday Referee*, to offer Vicky a feature called *Poets' Corner*, a feature which helped so many to establish themselves, from Dylan Thomas to Miss Fuller herself. So the biography is sprinkled with references to THE FREETHINKER's associates and contributors—H. Cutner, Bayard Simmons, etc. Then I remember Neuburg telling me, during his last illness, that he was occupying himself by correcting proofs for THE FREETHINKER. And Miss Fuller writes: "Probably the last person from outside to see him [Neuburg] was Mr. Cutner from THE FREETHINKER, in 1940 when he took the photograph of him in bed, the head propped up against the pillow. A beard had grown on his face because he could not shave."

But in the years between Neuburg's first contribution to THE FREETHINKER and his last services to the paper, the highlights belonged to "The Great Beast". Miss Fuller gives a riveting account of the ritual sex which Crowley and Neuburg practised as magic in Paris, and it is probably "one of the strangest religious exercises in history". She describes too how the lovers walked together in the African desert and called up spirits, and how they "opened the Temple" on the shores of Loch Ness. When one reads these amazing records, one cannot help feeling that the participants could scarcely have escaped "visions". They drove themselves to delirium through various exhaustions; and in the end apparitions were no more inexplicable than the ghost who can be attributed to "it must have been something I ate".

One can appreciate too, only too clearly, how magic can be used as an escape into illusionary self-importance. Crowley himself probably turned to magic because he was ashamed of the fact that the family fortune came from beer and that, in the language of his time, he was "not a gentleman". Neuburg took what he thought was

a short cut to inspirational fires; and when he left "The Great Beast" and was cursed, he was cut down to size, to an appealing little bird man who printed books of his own rhapsodic verses and later offered tea and cakes and conversation to young poets in a conservatory. It was magic which brought outrageous pretension to Neuburg's life; and it was magic which brought the inevitable retribution—the pay-off of pathos when the magic promise fails to be more than kinky make-believe. When I met Crowley, he was already beginning to pay that penalty as a poor old man who could no longer afford any temptation to the flesh or the world.

But Miss Fuller's book re-emphasises the lesson that anyone who claims to be a Master and hints at forbidden mysteries can for a time attract disciples. When Miss Fuller pointed out to one of Crowley's disciples that it was rather disgraceful that the climax of "The Paris Working" should have been a petition to the gods for *money*, she was solemnly assured that The Master had only mentioned money "to use up any surfeit of power brought down". People, one realises, are so anxious to believe, to see themselves, through the cult, in grander terms, that they will struggle violently to justify any imposture; and we must indeed be grateful to Miss Fuller for giving us a book which is a magnificent exposé of wishful thinking. ("It has taken 100,000,000 years to produce Aleister Crowley", one disciple exclaimed piously!)

Maybe some readers will find Book One, "Vicky As I Knew Him", a little bathetic; but surely everyone will be enthralled by Book Two, "Vicky's Story". Apart from everything else, there is a very credible tale which reveals how Jack the Ripper was murdered! And how delightful it is to learn that Crowley made beginner's errors when drawing up his portentous horoscopes! Finally, Miss Fuller asks the jackpot question: If Neuburg had not met Crowley, if he had remained faithful to rational freethinking, might he not have developed to find a secure place for himself as a minor poet rather than transient notoriety as "the man Crowley turned into a goat"; might he not have escaped the years of tragedy, the magic pay-off?

In *The Wine Of Violence* (Cape, 21s.), Neil S. Boardman shows how mean a small Bible-loving community in Minnesota can be. No wonder that one of the characters is driven to revolt and say that the Scriptures are gibberish. "The Bible is a great work of literature, mainly because it was translated in a poetic age, the age of Shakespeare. But it's not scientific. In your quotation (from the Bible) a mysterious word is explained by other words that are just as mysterious. It's like the definition of God they teach you in the catechism. 'God is a spirit'. But as we don't know what a spirit is, we're no better off than before . . . An educated person can hardly believe in God. 'The fear of God's a hangman's whip to keep the wretch in order.'"

Obi B. Egbuna is adroitly witty in his novel, *Wind Versus Polygamy* (Faber, 16s.), and the story is a well argued ethical case for many wives. In one scene Chief Ozuomba talks to a Catholic priest about polytheism. The chief says: "We have many gods. We don't call you pagan. You have only one god. You call us Pagan. Does it ever occur to you that you are only one god away from paganism?" But this is definitely a book you must read as it is full of cunning suspense as well as humour and intriguing polemics.

Design and Accident

By R. MITCHELL

WHEN derogating and dismissing an argument as absurd it is important that the reasons against it shall be weighty and relevant.

To all of us who are convinced that the argument from Design as proof of the existence and power of a Creator is invalid it was cheering to have F. A. Ridley standing shoulder to shoulder with us as he penned his article, printed in the March 19th issue of this journal, against theologians and their kin who continue to hold to the argument as reasonable. The present writer, however, was disturbed to see so valiant an opposition vitiated in its effect by its use of the space age as providing empirical knowledge against which the theologians would have to make a long needed retreat. It was like seeing a giant being hit with a match stick.

Does not our experience of theologians direct us rather to know that they will swallow up the empirical into the customary, conservative, and tenacious a priori origination of their reasoning? Now that they have decided from sheer need of survival to accommodate their apologetics to the findings of modern science they will use them with familiar adroitness as extra data to support their deductions. It will make little difference to them if knowledge is extended and new concepts call for a change in terminology. Whatever the mathematical-chemical-electronic-radioactive-energy system-inhering, interbalancing, interactive whatever-else-the-dynamic-cum-substantiality—or nonsubstantiality of things may be, and whatever is hinted of from this edge of the far impenetrables of space that by an Einstein's thinking we are asked not to conceive as spatial at all, the first a priori preoccupation of the theists will be unshaken. We shall see them wading neck deep in the rising tide of knowledge while they declare: "See! Look upon the pattern of the waves and the coherence of the whole, probe into every constituent of this flood, and find herein proof beyond all disputing that a Supreme Being made and controls it all." What coherence or design in it all there will be when the waters go over their heads and ours neither they nor we shall be in a condition to say.

There is one fact that we must accept as absolute and that is that the flood, here representing the multiple individuality and the one comprehensive totality of things, is already over our heads and we humans swallowed up in its depths. It is a welter of opposites. There is design in it, and there is chaos; there is coherence and there is conflict; there is direction and there is aimlessness; purpose and waste; plan and accident; purpose and absurdity; the rational and the irrational. However much we know of the nature of things, perhaps even the more we know, the whole presents itself to us as the rebus of a madman.

When a theologian's child sickens by the penetration of a parasitic virus, twists and cries throughout a prolonged torture, and finally dies in a last spasm of pain, will he then have reason to postulate Design as proving God's existence? This kind of phenomenon with much else in the way things are and work is integral with the enigma of existence. That Something Is Going On, that includes the universe and our own tiny planet, is clearly apparent, but philosophy, theology, and metaphysics go beyond their reach and capacity when they state by any argument that there is a Supreme Someone doing it all. This cannot be known. To argue from Design is to presume that the Design is known. Of course it isn't. We have no final knowledge of the Design of a midge or its place in the

million million things living or conglomerates of energised nuclei. How then can we talk of the Design of the whole?

And not knowing whether or not there is Design how can we deduce a Designer?

We cannot stop ourselves guessing, or gambling thought on a partial interpretation of things, projecting our minds imaginatively as it were from one tiny piece of a jigsaw towards what the whole picture may be. But to be egotistically assertive, to be dogmatic, to state categorically on the basis of Design or any other deduction that God is, that He is such and such, that He commands our obeisance to this and to that, or that a particular group of men are the repositories of this final and absolute knowledge, is an arrogance deserving the utmost intellectual contempt.

But equally none of us is in a position to state that the solar system or any other things exist or function accidentally, as F. A. Ridley fell into the error of saying, even though he was careful to say it in reference to the non-production of life. A negative posits knowledge in the same plane as a positive, but in this plane there is no knowledge, only speculation. Metaphysical speculation is fascinating, like mastering new juggling acts, but the abstractions that are thrown up and down and to and fro are merely stage acts demonstrating nothing more than mental agility. They are irrelevant to fact, irrelevant to the "what is" of things, and as for the dark around us that we call the mystery of things only a tiny glimmer of light reaches us that may or may not be relevant to ultimate truth, if indeed in the volatility of the universe truth ever can be ultimate.

Free, honest, and intelligent thinking requires no satisfaction in ultimates or in a priori and abstract deductions. There is so much to find out empirically that admission in humility of our intellectual incapacity to comprehend ultimates is but one more acceptance of what is true. Maybe the Something Going On knows what it's up to; maybe the Going On is its own significance; maybe we little humans are its coming into consciousness of itself; maybe it has an entity in its whole content; maybe, maybe, maybe anything; and maybe we haven't begun to find the right answers because we haven't started to ask the right questions. The one maybe not least among other questionable maybes is that an Architect called God, standing outside everything that is—wherever such an "outside" could possibly be—is "proved" to exist by the evidence of a design of things, when we know next to nothing about the things and nothing at all as to whether there is a design.

As H. G. Wells observed, the greater the circle of our knowledge the wider the circumference of our ignorance. And who shall claim to know what impinges upon the surface of that ever increasing circumference?

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CORRESPONDENCE

TROTSKY'S MURDER

In my recently conferred capacity of a "master of subterfuge and confusion", I feel inclined to comment on Trotsky's murder mentioned in Mr. R. Smith's letter (16/4/65).

I must remark in the first place that I do not see that this probably political assassination has any particular relevance to my recent article, "The Ethics of Assassination"; indeed if Mr. Smith goes on in this strain, I shall probably follow up that article with one on, "The Ethics of Confusion". My article was a short one, I had only the space for a few leading cases and, the murder of Trotsky, spectacular as it was, had no particular political importance, for there does not seem any likelihood that had the "Red War Lord" survived the war—he died in August 1940—he would still have played any notable revolutionary role during the post-war years.

With regard to the dramatic murder of Trotsky in Mexico City, there are two contradictory theories: (a) the Trotsky one (related to me personally by Pierre Frank, one of Trotsky's bodyguards in Mexico) that Trotsky was killed by an agent of Stalin, and (b) the Stalinist theory that Trotsky was killed by one of his disgruntled followers.

Whichever of these rival explanations may be true, I repeat that I do not think that this admittedly barbarous murder can be said to have altered the course of history in any significant way—which was all that I was concerned with in my article.

Re Mr. Smith's concluding innuendo that because L. D. Trotsky, the most brilliant Marxist of his day, may have been killed by a rival Marxist, this discredits Marxism itself: such an allegation certainly dubs Mr. Smith as "a master of subterfuge and confusion". For it is actually on the same "intellectual" level as the Christian claim that if, say, an Atheist runs off with someone else's wife, this proves that atheism is *ipso facto* "immoral!"

Let us stick to logic and thus avoid such irrelevant personalities.

F. A. RIDLEY.

A REPLY TO MY CRITICS

Mr. D. M. Chapman (THE FREETHINKER, 23/4/65) is wrong in claiming that pain fits in quite understandably with a rationalist view of the world. It would indeed be of little consolation to a man dying of cancer to hear from a rationalist that his dreadful disease was due to natural causes rather than to sin. In short the problem of pain is as much a problem for the rationalist as it is for the Christian.

A pessimist has no need to be dogmatic in regard to the human failures to alleviate suffering from the world. On the contrary, dogmatism usually springs from an optimistic source.

Mrs. Kit Mouat is on her high-horse at me, but I am not impressed with what she says. She would like to be a bit of a dictator, and not allow anyone to express the tragic side of life if she had her way. Here is optimistic dogmatism with a vengeance, and resentment to the deep sufferings of man. Death and suffering are not interesting so let us dismiss them, or treat them lightly. That's Mrs. Mouat's so-called philosophy in a nutshell. It is the very antithesis of all true philosophy. Escapism and nothing else.

R. SMITH.

THE TRIAL OF JESUS

Having published in your columns at some length Paul Winter's "Trial of Jesus", will you please also publish the pertinent pages from Ory's *Analysis of Christian Origins*, (27 et seq.) Marc Stephane published his book on the same subject about the same time as Mr. Winter's book appeared, and I asked him, if we could find an English publisher for a translation of his work, to include in the English edition (which never eventuated) a study of Winter's book; and he was quite prepared to do so. I should recommend to your readers who read French to study the works of Stephane and of Guy Fau, both fairly recent publications which were noticed in THE FREETHINKER when they appeared. They will find these works in the National Secular Society library.

C. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

[It was our intention to allow space—as we have frequently done in the past—for presentation of the mythicist case. Hence George R. Goodman's articles. However, we thank Mr. Bonner for his suggestion, and we hope soon to print M. Ory's relevant pages—Ed.]

SPAIN

With regard to the exiled National Confederation of Labour of Spain, I would like to suggest a few reasons for not lending our financial support to these people; for while we sympathise

strongly with them in their efforts to create a brighter future for their strife-torn land, we must recognise that responsibility for the state of affairs in Spain, now or at any other time, past or future, rests wholly with the Spanish. Provided there is no foreign interference (military, economic or financial), a people will get the government it deserves, and since the Spanish NCL currently dislike their government, it is up to them to do something about it, without relying upon goodwill gifts of one sort or another.

Recently, the appeal says, a large number of people have been thrown into jail. If we help to get them out, have we any assurance that they will not repeat their disastrous mistakes, and go back into jail? Rowdy demonstrations of this kind, in present-day conditions are surely more akin to foolishness than heroism.

Instead of relying on the British to foot the bill for this kind of incompetence in Catalonia, I admonish the Spanish NCL to improve its tactics in voicing protests. If they have the will to win a better future for their people, they will do so: when they have received the popular support they at present lack, they will surely take power. With this kind of success, we can be friends and gladly lend economic assistance where possible. Currently, however, there is only suicidal failure, and as failure is everybody's enemy, we must not assist it lest it repeats itself, ultimately at even greater cost to the National Confederation of Labour in Spain.

ERIC S. BARKER.

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The Freethinker

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MUCH recent discussion which has taken place, among secularists and elsewhere, must have led many to ask questions concerning the future of the Freethought movement. On the one hand, it has inherited a tradition of anti-biblicism and anti-theology which gave it point and meaning in the past. On the other, new forces springing from a wider humanism have sought to be inclusive and to raise questions lying far beyond the old boundaries. Secularism, like much else in the contemporary world, is in a state of flux and change. Two world wars have unsettled the general cultural climate and the Secularist is forced to ask himself how far he can bring his major contentions into harmony with the vista opened out by contemporary culture. The problem is difficult to face and not easy to resolve, calling as it does for an assessment of the secularist past and its relationship to the emerging future.

Secularism in the Past

The background of English secularism lay in the troubled years which followed the French Revolution. Atheistic ideas from France had then blended with a native opposition to ecclesiastical demands. A glance at the anti-clerical literature of the time reveals the extent to which demands for tithe and church rates gave point and meaning to the social challenge of Freethinkers. As a movement, secularism was essentially working-class simply because it was the operatives of the new industrial towns who were hit hardest by the power of the established Church. The new movements of political radicalism, such as Owenism and Chartism, went far to encourage and assist the Secularist demand that the whole of social and political life should be regarded from a secular perspective. Gradually, the Secularist became a specialised figure within the wider radical picture, challenging as he did the contemporary nexus of church and state because he denied both the validity of a religious interpretation of life and a political order based upon a church-state relationship. His anti-biblicism was very much of the type inherited from Thomas Paine and had point in a society where, to the astonishment of the young Engels, the verbal inspiration of the Bible was still among the coinage of intellectual currency taken seriously. The earlier writings of Bradlaugh, for example, concerned themselves with a defence of atheism in ideology and an attack upon the biblical narrative as representing good history or sound morality.

The career of Bradlaugh was of outstanding importance within this Secularist evolution. Under his tutelage, secularism became something more than a mere anti-religious attack. His active concern with law reform, with questions of land ownership or with the population question as an issue within political economy, went far to transfer the movement which he headed into a positive political grouping functioning within the radical wing of the Liberal Party. Bradlaugh was a great Englishman whose republican courage arose at the sight of German princelings. He was likewise a great parliamentarian who could fight out the

constitutional issues raised by secularism. The movement as he saw it was of a social order and content. Its membership swelled and it was reckoned that he was an influence, direct or indirect, upon a very large section of English radicalism. At his death in 1891, secularism had made its mark through his personal victories. True, it was still anti-theological and anti-biblical but its general social implications were of far wider moment.

It was after the death of Bradlaugh that times began to change. Middle-class agnosticism had likewise arrived within the intellectual orbit and tended to organise itself. Indeed, through its publications and the like, it had a vast influence and did a great deal to

undermine the older orthodoxy. Modernist movements possessed the churches themselves and, for educated Christians, fundamentalism became a thing of the past. Attacks on, for example, Moses or David, had once been telling in making out the case against the prevailing fundamentalism. They now lost all point when anti-Christianity found itself opposing modernist Christian advocates. The vital questions became far more in accord with those raised by the new biblical scholarship of a Harnack, a Loisy or a Schweitzer. Again, society was changing in its estimates. The rise of Socialism and of Labour political movements had gone far towards allying the old radical spirit with the new motives and explorations of the Labour Party. The Secularist of 1880 tended to have joined one of the new Labour movements by 1900 and to pursue his secularity in a different context. By 1897, the *Reformer*, a new rationalistic magazine, was carrying in its first volume an article by George Standring, a leading figure in Bradlaugh's movement, discussing the decline of secularism. Again, from the days of Robert Owen, the secularist movement sought to educate. But its educational policies were now pursued over a far wider and less committed field by the University Extension movement or the Workers Educational Association.

The Task Today

It would be futile to deny historically that secularism underwent a considerable decline. Its political radicalism had now passed into other channels and the parent movement was left alone with anti-theology and anti-biblicism. This was a sufficient content so long as the old theology and biblicism were taken seriously at large. There could still be forceful debates and the issue of strongly worded literature. But a day was to come when theology and biblicism were alike to play little part in the generalised public mind. The non-Roman Churches proved to be adaptable and compromising. Indeed, a time was to be reached when it would be possible for them not only to accommodate themselves to a far-reaching radical biblical criticism but even to atheism. The Roman Catholic Church represented an enclosed system of thought and the usual secularist attack passed it by. As fundamentalism wilted, it seemed more and more likely that the work of the Secularist was largely done. Certainly, it would appear

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Future of Secularism

By F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

to be true that the particular inherited outlook and propaganda of the Secularist of some half a century ago would have little reference to the present day.

Yet it is also true that the assertion of a secular view of life and society is still something standing in absolute and uncompromising opposition to the viewpoint adopted by any form of religious mysticism. This is the undying content of the secularist movement at any period. The vital task of the present is not to give to secularism "a new look". Indeed, such an aim would probably prove to be fatal to its best interests. It is to state this basic non-supernatural proposition in a form relevant to the intellectual climate of 1965. Few would probably deny that this particular intellectual climate is marked by a major interest in the sociological aspects of life. A secularism which is relevant to it must be one which is concerned to the utmost with the social nexus binding together individuals into contemporary society. A concern with education, civil liberties and the like is a specialised concern with issues which find their natural environment in the social setting.

It is likewise of crucial importance to recognise that the social material has changed vastly within contemporary life. Old class divisions have become blurred and indistinct. It is no longer possible to talk as of old about working-class movements with the same sureness of boundary. Education has increased considerably and the age of the paperback has seen a vast growth in the spread of knowledge. The underlying question is not whether secularism shall become respectable. In fact, it is difficult to see exactly what such a purpose would mean. But it is essential that secularism should be in accord with the best contemporary scholarship related to the subjects with which it deals. If, for example, the Secularist wishes to talk about the Bible and gets no further than a tirade in the old "Bible-bashing" style, he has clearly ended up in a mere futility which can do nothing but harm to the cause which he claims to represent. It is far more important to know the Hebrew-Christian literature in its historical setting from the standpoint of modern criticism, and to be able to form assessments accordingly. Again, in dealing with the major Churches, the Secularist is dealing with vast property-owning corporations. His concern must be with the effect of these corporations upon contemporary society. An appeal to history is only going to ring true if it has the sureness of a scholarly touch. It was for this reason that the late Dr. G. G. Coulton was so masterly an opponent for the Roman Catholic Church to face. It may well be that the greatest task which secularism must undertake during the next generation is that of the nursing and encouraging of a secularist spirit of exact scholarship able to puncture ecclesiasticism at its weakest points, those at which it makes its contacts with society.

It is not without interest that the secularist movement of the days of Paine, Hetherington or Carlile was first and foremost an anti-ecclesiastical movement and not a mere tirade of "Bible-smashing". Some of its most important work was done in its attack upon tithes, its battle for the liberties of the press or its securing the abolition of such an ecclesiastical prerogative as church rates. Once again, the secularist task has become today one of opposition to the ecclesiastical influences within the social order. It is a task which is not made the easier by the fact that a vast increase in a generalised secularity has robbed the specifically religious controversy of point for a great many people. But the issues are still there to be faced and, as the National Secular Society approaches the second century of its existence, its greatest achievement will lie in the extent to which it can overcome existing ecclesiastical legacies by relating a non-religious secularism to the climate of the time.

Philosophy of Science—Some Facets

8—CAUSE AND THEOLOGY

By DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

IN this series certain implications of the philosophy of science of special interest to freethinkers have been mentioned. The subject matter of the three previous articles—causation—is particularly rich in such implications. As a diversion, this article will discuss a few of these.

There is an argument for the existence of God that depends on the idea of causation. The argument runs: all things are caused and, therefore, if a chain of causes stretching back to infinity is to be avoided there must be a first cause. This first cause is known as God.

If it is accepted that there is a first cause, then there is no rule against calling it God. But it is dangerous; the name carries with it far more meaning than is implied by the argument. If, instead, it were called "Cause No. 1" the priests would not be so interested in the existence of a first cause.

But even the first cause need not be accepted. What is the objection to an infinite chain of causes; what reason is there to assume that the causal chain had a beginning in time?

A more subtle variation of the "causal argument" is to postulate that the world's causes form a hierarchy. Thus a man is dependent on causal relationships with factors in his environment; those factors, in turn, are dependent on other factors; and so on. Unless there is a prime cause, God, the argument continues, this causal hierarchy would need to be infinite, which is impossible.

This time the infinite regress is certainly objectionable. The weakness now seems to be that the causal structure need not be regarded as hierarchic—a series of ascending importance—but merely as interrelated. Following a chain of causal factors one could then ultimately return to the factor started with—albeit at an earlier point in time. A simple example of mutual independence of causes is the speed of a steam engine and its governor, or any other feed-back mechanism. Each is dependent on the other: neither is hierarchically superior to the other.

A further, and more sound, variation of the causal argument is due to Whitehead and was outlined in an article *THE FREETHINKER* dated February 26th. Again the concept of God that emerges is of little use to the Churches.

A Christian doctrine which well illustrates how logic is ignored for the sake of doctrine is the belief that although man has freewill God knows all his future acts.

The usual defence of this position is that God is somehow timeless and sees the whole of time, including all our free decisions, together.

Now, either future events already exist in some sense or they do not. If they do, then there are no free choices left to be made. If they do not, then they have yet to be decided and they cannot be known. A thing cannot both "be" and "not be".

If there is really free choice, then the most that a God could know would be the alternative courses of action open to each decision-making organism.

VISIT TO LEWES

THE National Secular Society and the Thomas Paine Society are organising a visit to Lewes, Sussex—where Paine's house still stands—on Sunday, July 25th. A coach will depart from central London at 9.30 a.m. Further details will be announced later.

A Critique of Christian Origins

By F. A. RIDLEY

ABOUT the middle of the 2nd century onwards, the secular literature of the Roman Empire began to take periodical notice of a new oriental cult of Jewish origin, the Church or cult of Jesus the Messiah or (in Greek) Christ. From about this time on, Roman and Greek writers like the Emperor Marcus Aurelius and Lucian of Samasata make occasional references to this Christian sect which already appeared to enjoy a respectable antiquity, its initial foundation being ascribed with some consistency to the much earlier reign of the Emperor Tiberius (14-37), whose local representative in Judaea was the procurator Pontius Pilate.

Rather later, towards the end of the 2nd century, a document technically described (from the name of its modern editor) as the Muratorian MS, and apparently dated between about 180 and 200, gives a list of sacred scriptures held in special reverence by the Church of Rome: a list broadly but not completely identical with the present New Testament. (As late as the 4th century the oldest MS, the Codex Sinaiticus, now in the British Museum, also presents some points of difference with the New Testament.)

About the same time, a Greek-speaking writer, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, mentions (for the first time apparently) the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as being canonical, authoritative documents recognised as such by the orthodox Christian Church, though not apparently by some already heretical sects upon the fringe of Christianity. Soon after, a canonical New (i.e. Christian, as distinct from Jewish) Testament became recognised by the whole orthodox Church virtually identical with the one we have today. Such is all, or virtually all, that is known for certain about Christianity up to about the year 200.

If we are to accept the Christian account, Christianity itself had already been in existence for a century and a half between the initial life and death of Jesus Christ and the official recognition (around 180) of the four canonical gospels which alone describe his life, teaching and death. This is a fairly long time; nevertheless, the so-called New Testament still remains the only professedly first-hand account of Christian origins. How far, if at all, are these documents historical?

Estimates in the critical circles of biblical scholarship vary widely from total acceptance to total denial. This failure to agree on nearly every problem raised in the New Testament may perhaps be held to prove that where informed opinion differs so widely, little or nothing can be stated with certainty. That is, the vast corpus of critical literature relating to Christian origins surely deals mainly with conjecture rather than with facts. Upon one conclusion at least, practically all non-fundamentalist New Testament scholars are agreed. Whatever the amount of historical truth that the New Testament, and in particular the Gospels contain, they tell us far more about what their early Christian contemporaries thought about Christian origins than they do about the actual Christian origins themselves.

For modern critical scholarship entirely endorses that acute comment of Celsus—perhaps the first scientific secular critic of the Christian cult at the end of the 2nd century—that the Christians had themselves “edited” their Gospels “once, twice, several times” (Cf. Celsus, *The True Word*, part of which is preserved in the reply of the Christian scholar, Origen in the 3rd century). No doubt the Christian censorship disposed effectively of the remainder.

Prior to about the middle of the 2nd century, by which

time the Christian Church was already a going concern and as such was beginning to emerge from the mists of legend that still surrounded its formative years, secular sources that may be held to shed light on Christian origins are singularly meagre. However, it would appear that some chiefly mythicist scholars tend to make too much of the apparent paucity of evidence (I describe as mythicist those who deny that there is any historical basis to the Gospels, an extreme and, in my opinion at least, improbable view). For after all, how is it possible at this time of day to know for certain that no other literary sources were ever available? For in dealing with the corpus of classical literature, and very particularly with any secular literature which has any bearing on Christian origins, it is always necessary to remember that the entire surviving literature of antiquity has had to weather not only the vagaries of wind and weather, but also a thousand years of Christian censorship.

In the light of this important fact, one should not make—as again some chiefly mythicist scholars tend to do sometimes—too much of the “argument from silence”. For no doubt any critical reference to Christian origins that too obviously contravened the orthodox Christian tradition would have had short shrift from the ubiquitous censorship of the Catholic Church in the Ages of Faith. Actually the references to Christianity during its earliest years *may* have been much more numerous and explicit than any we now possess; in fact the more explicit they were, the more likely surely is it that they would have been suppressed.

Rather ironically, just as there were four Gospels, so there were also four secular witnesses of Christian origins: the Jewish historian, Josephus (end of 1st century), and three Roman writers: Tacitus, Pliny and Suetonius, who all wrote in the first quarter of the 2nd century.

Let us review them chronologically. Apart from a cryptic reference to the brother of the so-called Messiah, Josephus's sole extant reference to Jesus is in a passage which appears to be as obvious a Christian forgery as anything can well be. Even Mr. Paul Winter, who accepts it as partly genuine, has to assume that the query: “if he [Christ] can be called human” was interpolated by a Christian hand. With all due respect it appears extremely unlikely that an orthodox Jewish priest like Josephus could have ever described the founder of a rival cult as a wise man.

It is, however, probable that Josephus did refer to Jesus, since Origen, the relatively honest Christian Father explicitly tells us that Josephus rejected Christ's claims. But this surely presupposed some explicit reference, since silence implies consent. The conjecture of a famous Jewish scholar, the late Robert Eisler, seems much more likely: that Josephus's original text did contain a reference to Jesus, but a hostile one—perhaps ending in a sneer at the virgin birth, since it is followed in the extant text by a sneer at a similar pagan myth.

It seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that the accounts given by the Romans Tacitus and Pliny—our oldest non-Jewish references—are totally incompatible. For according to Tacitus, the Emperor Nero (56-68) a picturesque ruffian, put to death a huge multitude (*ingens multitudo*) of Christians under the most spectacular circumstances in AD 64; whereas about 112, Pliny, then governor of Bythinia (in Asia Minor), had to write to the reigning emperor, Trajan, (98-117) to ask what to do with the

(Concluded on page 156)

This Believing World

THE CURATE who refused to baptise his children until they were old enough to know what was happening, found a hearty supporter in a letter to the *Daily Express* (30/4/65). The lady writer welcomed his decision with three cheers. Whether baptism is a relic of the times when washing in the East was avoided as much as possible, and had to be enforced as a religious rite, or a relic of Aquarius, the water-bearer, of the signs of the Zodiac, is still unsettled, but in a country where water is plentiful, it is as useless as confirmation.

★

THAT BEAUTIFUL and persistent Christian sect Jehovah's Witnesses, most of whom know precious little of Jehovah, anyway, find many supporters still in the Christian Church. For example, the Rev. P. M. Heckley who defends their "keenness" (*South East London Mercury*, 9/4/65), and the Rev. M. Hamilton Sharp who commends them in contrast to the "advocates [of religion] today of a high pressure and remote control evangelism". He believes that "there is no substitute for personal contact in the home", which the Witnesses practise.

★

IN FACT, the one thing that parsons are shunning more and more is visiting members of their "flock" in their own homes. It leaves the clergyman a target for inconvenient questions which he can't or prefers not to answer. The dear old days when a vicar was warmly welcomed in the home have gone with the past. That no doubt accounts for the lack of opposition to the "other" people who "hard-sell religion" on the doorstep.

★

HERE we have Dr. Reindorp, the Bishop of Guildford, instructing the readers of the *Sunday Mirror* (18/4/65), after nearly 1900 years of strenuous Christian teaching, what Christianity really is. He begins with "God reigns"—but we could safely bet that about the last thing he would do would be to support such a proposition publicly in debate. The lack of interest in Christianity and the emptiness of the churches must, make it painfully obvious to the Bishop that God does not reign.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Secular Society was held at 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1, on Wednesday, April 14th. Present Mr. D. H. Tribe who was in the chair, Mr. W. Griffiths (Treasurer), Messrs. Barker, Collins, Condon, Kuebart, Micklewright, Millar, Miller, Shannon, Sproule, and Timmins, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. McIlroy, Mrs. Venton, and the Secretary (Mr. W. McIlroy). Apologies were received from Messrs. L. Ebury and F. Warner. New members were admitted to Glasgow, Inverness, Marble Arch, North London and Parent branches. A tribute was paid to the late Mr. F. A. Hornibrook, a member of the Committee for many years who died recently. The President welcomed Mr. F. H. Amphlett Micklewright who was attending his first meeting. The Annual Conference agenda was endorsed. Mr. William Miller, Chairman of Birmingham branch, was elected a trustee of the Society. Financial reports for February and March were accepted. The annual financial statement of Manchester branch was also presented to the meeting, and congratulations were expressed to the branch and its officers. The Committee decided that the Society should affiliate to International Co-operation Year. Letters of protest would be sent to the United Nations and the Canadian High Commissioner regarding a decision by the Supreme Court of Ontario Province, that persons who apply for Canadian citizenship must believe in God. It was also decided to protest to the Finnish authorities about the prosecution of the author of *Midsummer Night's Dance*. Letters would be sent protesting against the prosecution of Mr. S. Smith, of Boston, Lincs., for refusing to pay part of his rates, as he objected to Boston Town Council giving £500 towards the restoration of Lincoln Cathedral. Mr. W. Shannon reported on the conference on Civil Liberties in Northern Ireland.

The next meeting was arranged for Wednesday, May 26th, 1965. W. McI.

A CRITIQUE OF CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

(Concluded from page 155)

Christians in his province whom he had apparently only just come into contact with, and about whom he appeared to know nothing except that they assembled early in the morning and sang a hymn to Christ *sicut Deo* (as though to a god).

How is it possible to reconcile these two accounts? For Pliny, a universally able and well-informed governor according to Trajan, also an unusually able and well-informed emperor, knows practically nothing about the Christians who, according to Pliny's contemporary, Tacitus, were already numerous in Rome under Nero half a century earlier. Surely these two statements are irreconcilable. One (or both) of the current texts of Tacitus and Pliny must surely have been tampered with by a Christian hand.

Our last "witness", Suetonius, writing a few years later (125) gives us an account of Christian origins in flat contradiction to all the others. For, at least if taken literally, Suetonius tells us that Christianity started in Rome, not Palestine. For the Emperor Claudius (41-56) expelled the Jews (or some Jews) from Rome "on account of a riot instigated by Chrestos [Christ]". Did Christianity start in a riot in the Jewish ghetto in Rome? But to prove this, one must identify "Chrestos" with *our* Christ.

Such are our rather negative conclusions. They appear to point unmistakably to the conclusion that the actual history of Christianity in the positive sense really only begins in the second half of the 2nd century. For before this we have only legend and conjecture. Even the historicity of Jesus is only probable (if at all) on circumstantial evidence. All that we know is that the Christian sect did actually originate in the 1st century, probably in Palestine (though even that is not quite certain, witness Suetonius above) and possibly under Tiberius and Pontius Pilate. For despite the vast pseudo-historical literature upon the subject of Christian origins, this is about all that is positively known of the formative era of Christianity prior to about 150, when the Christian Church first began to emerge from the domain of legend into that of authentic history. One can perhaps add that this rather unsatisfactory conclusion will probably remain until and unless the chance discovery of some early Christian counterpart to the Dead Sea Scrolls may enable us to review Christian origins in a more constructive context.

PINTER CONDEMNS SOUTH AFRICAN "PIRACY"

HAROLD PINTER, the playwright, in an interview published in the May issue of *Anti-Apartheid News* condemned the South African government's latest moves to beat the "cultural" boycott. He objected "very strongly indeed" to what he called a "piracy plan", though the move was in a way pathetic, "a gesture of panic". His instinct was "to say, in those terrible circumstances, let the theatre die . . . To hell with cultivated people, and to hell with the theatre, if the conditions under which so many Africans live are not to change." Mr. Pinter added that he would support extension of the anti-apartheid ban to films if such a proposal came up before the Screenwriters' Guild. *Anti-Apartheid News*, which is the organ of the Anti-Apartheid Movement of 89 Charlotte Street, London, W.1, has a circulation of nearly 20,000. Membership is 10s. per year.

GOD

God the Father, God the Son,
And Holy Ghost (that's three not One)
We have read about the life he led
And now I say 'Thank God he's dead'

LOUIS MACKAY (aged 14)

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD. (Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, May 16th, 6.45 p.m.: D. S. WRIGHT, "Psychology and Religion".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, May 16th, 11 a.m.: Dr. JOHN LEWIS: Teilhard de Chardin and *The Phenomenon of Man*.

Notes and News

THE congregation of the Society of Jesus is meeting in Rome to elect a General, a new "Black Pope", who will control the 36,000 members of the most powerful of Roman Catholic orders. No Italian has been elected for 75 years, but two of the fancied candidates—Father Paolo Dezza and Father Roberto Tucci—are Italian; the present acting General, Father John Swain, is a Canadian. The new General will be the twenty-eighth successor to St. Ignatius Loyola, and there is good reason to think that he will be elected quickly. During the voting the fathers live only on bread and water!

★

THE American Jewish Committee reacted with "sadness and disappointment" to reports that the Vatican Council's draft declaration on the Jews would be altered before the Council reconvened on September 17th (*Jewish Chronicle*, 30/4/65). The President of the Committee, Mr. Morris B. Abram prayed that the "vast forces of enlightenment in the Church would prevail." Dr. Joachim Prinz, for the American Jewish Congress, pointed out that the intended statement should be seen, not as an effort to exonerate the Jews from the charge of deicide, "but as a means of exonerating the Church from the role its teachings have played in anti-semitism and the horrors resulting from it." But the Jews had no part to play in the decisions; they could only await "with patience and dignity an act of the Catholic conscience . . .".

THE "most stinging comment"—as the *Jewish Chronicle* described it—came however from Professor Rabbi Joshua Heschel. The deicide charge was the "most dreadful calumny ever uttered", the Rabbi said. It had resulted in "rivers of blood and mountains of human ashes". To millions of Christians and to "the overwhelming majority of Roman Catholic bishops" it was "absurd, monstrous and unhistorical and the supreme repudiation of the gospel of love." The weakening of the Council's document in any of its aspects "would remain for all time as one of the major contributions to anti-semitism", and Rabbi Heschel prayed that "Satan may never witness such a triumph".

★

RABBI HESCHEL had described the Vatican Council's draft declaration as "inspired by a grandeur of conscience and the spirit of love". Edward Keating, editor of the liberal Catholic monthly, *Ramparts*, had a different view. Instead of the 2,500 priests "getting down on their knees" to the Jews, they had "decided to forgive" them for crucifying Jesus. Mr. Keating regarded this as arrogant and a "bitter irony". If he were a Jew he would "throw it back in the faces of the churchmen".

★

"It is customary to sniff at 'crude atheism'", said Ivor Brown in the *Humanist* (May). "But is it really so contemptible a practice to put into words which all can understand the doubts and questionings which others have stated at greater length, with more learning, but not always with more clarity?" And Mr. Brown described the "spirited" public debates as a pleasant part of his "further education". The open-air Atheists of that time risked imprisonment, because the Blasphemy Laws were being enforced, and one of the speakers that Mr. Brown heard had been more than once in jail. "Some governing body, I think the LCC had note-takers eager to get hold of actionable remarks". But Mr. Brown is mistaken in saying that they were "chiefly waiting of course for observations on the Virgin Mary". Satirical remarks about God or Jesus Christ would be just as likely to incur a blasphemy prosecution.

★

THE Spanish Church has a great opportunity to inspire a Christian Democrat movement in Spain similar to that in other European and Latin American countries, according to Hugh Thomas (*New Society*, 29/4/65). "The Church's overall position has rarely been stronger", Mr. Thomas said, "as much from the weakness of any other institution as from its own qualities". Catholicism is, of course, the state religion taught in all schools, and out of 12,000 books published last year 1,300 were religious. "The Church runs no fewer than 1,600 newspapers and periodicals (out of 2,100), of which 45 are dailies (out of 100 in Spain). It has 1,000 cinemas out of 8,500." But the "pervasive influence" of the Church is not to be confused with "explicit subscription to Catholic belief". Mr. Thomas gave the proportion of priests in the population as one to 1,250 (one to 2,000 in some places) compared with one to 800 in 1931, and referred to an "overall alienation". In the future, however, he thought the Church would be "more likely to be confronted with apathy than with the violent anti-clericalism of the past".

★

IT is still likely that the socialists would be the largest party in a democratic Spain. "But it would clearly be advantageous", Mr. Thomas thought, "to find themselves faced in *constructive* opposition by a Christian Democratic movement around which the bourgeoisie could constitutionally gather . . .". The italics are ours.

Easter (3)

By GEORGE R. GOODMAN

IN THE Babylonian section of the British Museum is the translation of a tablet found in Babylon referring to their god Bel—whom the Israelites called Baal (see the various theological encyclopedias)—estimated to belong to a period of 1500 BC (possibly much older) and recording a "Passion drama" which is so similar to the Gospel account that it is quite obvious that the New Testament fabricators copied it almost word for word.

Here they are (Cf. also Findlay's *Rock of Truth*):—

Babylonian Legend	Christian Legend
Bel is taken prisoner.	Jesus is taken prisoner.
Bel is tried in the Hall of Justice.	Jesus is tried in the hall of Pilate.
Bel is smitten.	Jesus is scourged.
Bel is led away to the Mount.	Jesus is led away to Golgotha.
With Bel are taken two malefactors, one of whom is released.	With Jesus two malefactors are led away; another, Barabbas, is released.
After Bel has gone to the Mount,—the City breaks out in tumult.	At the death of Jesus, the veil of the Temple is rent; the dead come forth from the graves and enter the City.
Bel's clothes are carried away.	Jesus's robe is divided amongst the soldiers.
Bel goes down into the Mount and disappears from life.	Jesus, from the grave, goes down into the realm of the dead.
A weeping woman seeks him at the gate of burial.	Mary Magdalene comes weeping to the tomb to seek Jesus.
Bel is brought back to life.	Jesus rises from the grave alive.

By far the choicest sentence in the Christian legend is "the dead came forth from the graves and entered the City".

Did the graves have electrically operated lids and who pushed the buttons? Whose graves were selected? As flesh decomposes quickly in the East, was there a team of plastic surgeons to cover the skeletons with flesh? Who supplied the brains, motor nerves and blood plasma? As the brigade of the dead was stark naked, who clothed them?

Did Moss Bros. have a branch at the cemetery and did they supply the garments "on tick", seeing that it was such a holy occasion? Did the jolly dead return to their graves or commingle with the local lads and lassies, having the night out? (Like some football players?)

Reasoning is singularly absent in people indoctrinated with theological absurdities and the more fantastical these are, the more they are ready to believe them. "*Credo Quia Absurdum*",—"I believe it, because it is absurd" is a favourite maxim of the highly orthodox.

But to come back to the Babylonian legend. If it should be thought that their Passion drama was an isolated case, it will presently be shown that the Egyptian Jesus, Iesu, came even nearer to the Gospel one and that there can be no doubt that the whole story—with its many priest-invented accretions—referred to annual solar events, dramatising the waning and waxing of the Sun's rays and the consequent disappearance and reappearance of vegetation, corn and vine which, to all nations around the Mediterranean, was of vital importance.

Not only were there corn-gods and corn-mothers in Southern Europe, but all districts in our Northern parts too, had—and *still have*—their spring and harvest customs which are merely a perpetuation of their treasured ancient beliefs that remained quite untouched, despite the flood of superimposed ecclesiastical rituals and doctrines. (*Vide* Sir James G. Frazer's monumental work *The Golden*

Bough, showing that magic and religion went hand in hand.)

The observant reader may now ask: *why* is it that the alleged crucifixion and death of a mythical Christ is celebrated in the spring, the wrong time of the year?

Originally, it was celebrated, in Egypt for instance, in the autumn where it rightly belongs, as the autumn equinox is the natural "date line" for the decline and death in nature.

At that time, the Egyptian priests threw down the Tat or Tau Cross (which the Church, later on, turned into the "Cross of St. Anthony"—but it existed already in Egypt for thousands of years prior to our era) and erected it again at the solstice or at the spring equinox, because it symbolised *life* not death!

When the Christian creeds were manufactured, it was decided that the devotees could not possibly be expected to wait for the resurrection of their alleged Saviour a period of six months—which would have given the game away! Furthermore, such a sane course would have left little room for mystery and magic, stirring the imagination and emotions—all of which form such an essential part of Roman Catholicism and are, in fact, the very basis of all Christian denominations which propagate the idea of a "crucified Saviour" whose death and resurrection are celebrated and whose body and blood are consumed.

A clear intimation of the resurrection on the third day is seen in an Egyptian text in the *Book of the Dead* which runs: "I will arrange for you to go to the river when you die and to come to life again on the third day".

Mary searches for Jesus for three days, as Isis sought the hidden Horus. But the Egyptians were told that the period of disappearance was actually six months, because they learned that Isis had lost her child at the autumn equinox and found him again at the equinox of spring. Also, they had an ancient festival of "Hiding the Tau-cross" in the Nile and six months later a ceremony of "Finding the Cross".

The Egyptian Jesus, Iesu, also had a "Mary and Martha", viz. Isis and Nephthys (in an earlier cult Apt and Hathor), the two protectors of the hidden babe. They are also the two sisters who weep for him.

Mary is the Egyptian Meri, in its plural form Merti, in Latin Mertae, in Hebrew and German Martha, in Italian Marta. The Egyptian Lazarus antedated the Gospel figure by several thousand years. In Egyptian it was "El-Azar" or Lord Osiris, in Latin it became "El-Azar-Us"; later on the "el" was dropped, leaving Lazarus whom Horus, the Christ, raised at Beth Anu, which became Beth-any in the Gospels. All irrefutable evidence that the Gospels were merely a re-script of ancient Egyptian literature.

Jesus was supposed to be born in Beth-lechem (the House of Bread)—this is just the astrological sign of Virgo; (hence that silly Virgin-birth), it is the home of the great star Spica, and *Spica* is Latin—the ear of wheat, which looks like a spike. Directly opposite the sign of Virgo is Pisces (the fishes), hence the Christ becomes the Fish-avatar and the Bible just teems with the fish-typology or symbolism.

We have there the fishermen, the gold in the fish's mouth, the miraculous draught of fishes, the "fishers of men". And the Romans called the early Christians *Pisciculi*, which means "Little Fishes", i.e. members of the fish-cult. The Greeks called Jesus the "Big Fish" *Ichthys*.

nd in the Catacombs, the fish-signs predominated, not the cross.

Fishes were on the Christ's forehead, at his feet or on a plate on the altar. In Aberdeen Cathedral is a stone showing two fishes in the manger, instead of a babe! Bishops and archbishops parade proudly with a huge representation of a fish-mouth on their head—but they all it a mitre!

Jesus is, of course, Greek for Joshua and we recall the phrase "Joshua, Son of Nun". But Nun is an Egyptian word and means: primeval space or the waters of the Nun. In the Hebrew alphabet the letter "N" is called and spelled "Nun" and means—of all things—"fish"!

If the Egyptians symbolised life by bread, as the first birth, and by fish, as the second, then it is not surprising that in ancient religious allegory the Christ figure is depicted as multiplying loaves and fishes and feeding a multitude with them!

In the *Book of the Dead* a passage gave to Anu the characteristic designation as the "place of multiplying bread". So here we have the prototype of the "miracle" of the loaves and fishes. And as the "body of the god" was broken into fragments to feed the participants of the ritual, it then transpires that the Eucharist is *Egyptian* in origin.

What does the Greek word *Eucharistein* mean? Simply to "say thanks" (or grace) for the "staff of life", i.e. bread. This little ceremony was practised by all tribes and nations in the East and is re-enacted by the head of every Jewish family every Friday evening in Britain, America or anywhere else, without the Catholic mumbo-jumbo. Excommunicated Catholics should provide their *own* sensible "communion" at home!

The Egyptian Jesus i.e. Horus, also turns water into wine. He puts grapes into the water and says: "the water of Teta is as wine, even as that of Ra". And during the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles a similar ceremony is enacted.

No figure of a man on a cross appeared during the first six or seven centuries of our era. It was always the astrological lamb, because Aries (the lamb) was the sign of the age that preceded the Pisces (fishes) era. It was, therefore, literally a "hang-over".

But at the Council of Trullo (during the reign of Justinian II) it was decreed that the lamb should be superseded by the figure of a man. For, by that time, two centuries had already elapsed since the Council of Chalcedon (451), when a non-historical "Christ" had been elevated to the position of a "God-man", so that the Church's newly invented glamour figure should in no way be less than the many pagan Christs who had already preceded him.

For a millennium and a half, humanity has been stultified by the most brazen fraud that crazed bigots ever concocted. The lugubrious exhibition outside convents, churches and in South European country-lanes, of a blood-dripping "saviour" on a cross, must nowadays fill rational beings with a justified revulsion to orthodox religion.

The Church claims that she needs an ideal, hero-figure for her uneducated and superstitious adherents—a "man-god" who not only "forgives sins", but also looks after people in distress and sickness. Hence also the popularity (amongst women) of the emotional Madonna cult (Isis with Horus) in Catholic dioceses, and its psychological influence. The Church says that an ideal hero-figure is needed for people like Albert Schweitzer and his staff, St. Camillus Hospitals (manned entirely by monks), Little Sisters Hospitals, CND campaigners and others.

But Socrates, Plato, Kant, Goethe, Nietzsche and many more required no "Christ" in order to be *illuminati*.

CORRESPONDENCE

ATHEISTS AND AGNOSTICS

For the last twelve months I have been reading *THE FREETHINKER* and derive much pleasure from it. I was one of the people who were subjected to Catholic indoctrination throughout their education and know the terrible "fear of God" and the outsize guilt-complex with which one must live even as a child of ten or perhaps younger. It is a state of mind in which no sensitive person can exist sincerely for a long period.

At the age of sixteen, upon leaving school, I became what I should call a person sitting on the fence. Much of the dogma of the Church had by this time, become wholly unacceptable to me; such things as the ability to buy souls out of purgatory, the immaculate conception, the ludicrous fable of the Bible and above all the fact that I had to believe our ever-loving Almighty God could condemn a poor soul to an everlasting roasting for consciously failing to attend mass on one Sunday and dying unrepentant of this insignificant misdemeanour.

For ten years I sat upon this most uncomfortable fence with one motive and two reasons. The motive was indecision—leaving myself free to hop back into the arms of the mother Church in times of trouble or when the fear of death obsessed me. The two reasons were the fear of hell and the hope of eternal glory, deep-seated by Catholic brain-washing.

One of the major factors which contributed to my decision to burn my boats and choose mental freedom was the Church itself, for it must be the falsest institution in the whole of creation. The subtle way in which it can alter its doctrines to gain popularity and in doing so sell its fervent adherents down the river by then ordering them to believe in what it previously condemned can never cease to amaze. Similarly, one must be amazed at the way in which it can accredit its own inventions such as rigid observance of the sacraments, celibacy, etc., to the wishes of its gentle patron Jesus Christ.

To rid myself once and for all of the bonds of religion and belief in a god in any shape or form was, I should say, one of the greatest events in my life and my mental freedom and free access to unbiased logic are things I prize above all.

Now, after spending some time as a true member of the secular world, I must admit there is one element I find extremely disappointing. This is the pathetic rivalry between the Atheists and the Agnostics. I am far from being a philosopher and feel this is probably a good thing for I think in quoting too much one loses sight of one's objective. It seems to me that the Atheist always adopts a policy of aggression to the Agnostic, always accusing him of sitting on the fence, and the poor Agnostic has his work cut out defending his position instead of attacking. It is a great pity that atheism does not represent a logical point of view for, if it did, we could all be united under its banner.

How can any man state categorically that there is no supernatural being? In doing this the Atheist is being as dogmatic and illogical as the Christian, Jew, Buddhist or any other religious body. Admitted, there has never been a form of religion which can stand up to the test, nor will there ever be for supernatural, itself, is not compatible with nature, but, just as there is no proof for any form of infinite being there is none against.

The Agnostic is not a fence-sitter, he is far from it and does not deserve to be treated with discredit by Atheists. Anyone who has the intelligence to reject Christianity should have more sense than to bring extremism into a well ordered secular society.

Surely there is only one point of view any logical person could hold upon this subject. I have no knowledge of a supernatural being, there is no evidence for one nor has one irrevocably revealed himself to the satisfaction of the unbiased, therefore I have no reason to believe in one. Just as there is no evidence on behalf of such a being, there is no evidence which we could put forward to substantiate a claim that there is definitely no other existence in, perhaps, another dimension and our body is only a vehicle for some other impulse within us. I agree this is extremely unlikely but there has been no one alive yet who could comprehend the infinite.

In accusing Agnostics of sitting on the fence, the Atheist must only be expressing his own fear that his standpoint is too radical and in standing his ground he is likening himself to the gullible Christian.

The Churches rightly call their following a flock, for they are sheep-like in their acceptance of ideas which they cannot evaluate for themselves. Let us not have a flock of Atheists following some dogmatic philosophy which they feel too intelligent to reject.

MICHAEL R. EVANS.

NOT IMPORTANT

A life-long member of secular societies and a subscriber to *THE FREETHINKER* for more years than I can remember, I was mildly surprised that it was thought necessary to emphasise the

non-identity of THE FREETHINKER with the National Secular Society.

It almost seems that its main object was to prepare readers for what appeared in the two following numbers.

In these, a greatly disproportionate facility was given to a discussion of the trial of Jesus by Paul Winter.

Space in THE FREETHINKER is extremely valuable, and I don't think so much of it should be devoted to a matter such as this. After all, the question of whether Jesus lived; the manner of his trial and death is, from the Freethinker's standpoint, similar to the one whether the Stratford Shakespeare wrote the plays.

An interesting pastime, but not important. An equally long discussion on the events alleged to have taken place soon after his death, would have been more useful.

What Freethinkers are concerned about are the disastrous results to mankind over the years, consequent on millions of people having their lives managed for them on the belief that his intervention will make the difference between everlasting bliss and misery in the life to come; and their mistaken ideas of inherited sin and vicarious punishment.

J. G. CARTWRIGHT.

DAVID AND SOLOMON

Though I did not intend to take up any more of your valuable space on the above subject, I feel obliged to make some comments as Mr. Cutner so kindly alludes to me in his very interesting article.

According to D. Winton Thomas (Ed.) of *Documents from Old Testament Times*, p.46, the first biblical kings mentioned in contemporary Assyrian monuments are Ahab and Omri 9th century BC. Shalmaneser III (859-824 BC) mentions Ahab the Israelite as a member of a coalition against whom he fought at Karkar. Sanacherib's own contemporary records tell of his campaign in the west, boasting of, and no doubt exaggerating his exploits, his siege of Jerusalem, where Hezekiah himself was shut up like a bird in a cage. In addition Ahab and Omri are mentioned on the Moabite stone now in the Louvre.

If the historical existence is confirmed by contemporary records, I think we are justified in assuming the historical existence of Ahab's contemporary King Jehoshaphat of Judah who was only the 5th after Solomon.

If the priestly propagandists, or whoever wrote the stories, were out to create a non-existent idealist king, why did they charge him with several rather revolting crimes? Such as treacherous murder (2 Sam. 11) or human sacrifices (2 Sam. 21).

As regards archaeological evidence, we must remember that very little work has been done on the traditional temple site, due to the fanatical veneration for that spot and the building of the mosque. So we must give it the benefit of the doubt and accept the historicity of David and Solomon.

"BEN YEHUDA"

19th-CENTURY RATIONALISM

In the recent TV debate between Dr. Donald Soper and David Tribe it was amusing to note how often the former chirped "nineteenth-century materialism", as if this was all that was needed to refute Mr. Tribe's statements.

At present it seems popular for the "get-with-it" and "honest to x" brands of Christian to deride modern rationalism as being "Victorian", "Old-time irreligion". But let us not be intimidated by these devices, for the Christians have good reason for wishing to sweep Freethought under a carpet of generalised anti-Victorianism, in order that attention may be diverted from the nineteenth-century Christians' folly and cruelty in opposing almost every progressive idea and reform—evolution, anaesthetics, birth control, women's suffrage and education, to name a few. Today, the Christian Churches' political spokesmen are still opposing reform of the laws relating to divorce, abortion, homosexuality and Sunday observance!

Better "nineteenth-century" rationalism than medieval and twentieth-century taboos and totalitarianism!

NIGEL SINNOTT.

HELL

The concomitants of death occur in its approach. One may, fleetingly flirt with it in careless youth; "Freethinkers" (forgive the quotes), in their scorn of Heaven and Hell, may turn their eyes aside.

I can't forget a dear old uncle of mine, an Agnostic, who commented, back in the Thirties, on a letter I wrote to Chapman Cohen; "Dying is an unpleasant business". I thought this the understatement of a lifetime. I still think so; I think it the conclusive argument against anything called "Love", usually expressed in self interest, and I hope Mr. McCall will, eventually, know what to expect; and to brace himself up to it.

ARTHUR E. CARPENTER.

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IN THE by now remote age prior to 1914, hereditary monarchy was the rule and republics the exception throughout the European continent. France, Switzerland and Portugal (only since 1910) were, I think, the only European republics. However, the First World War resulted in a royal exodus on an international scale beginning with the Russian Revolution of 1917. Today, monarchy is reduced to a rare exception; for on the European continent it exists on the old pattern only in Scandinavia and the Benelux countries and (thanks solely to Winston Churchill's intervention at the end of the last war) in Greece.

However, one still major European state now resolutely retains what an old Republican once described as the "Royal Circus". This is England—or rather since the Act of Union in 1707—Great Britain; a Great Britain which has often been described as "the conservative land in Europe".

The Evolution of the Monarchy

Viewed from a sociological standpoint the evolution of the monarchy in Great Britain has represented an evolutionary process punctuated by two sharp consecutive revolutionary crises: crises represented respectively by the two major English revolutions in 1649-60 and 1688-9. Paradoxically but undeniably, the monarchy, like most of the other non-revolutionary institutions in these islands owes its modern development, and probably even its existence, to the revolutionary sequence during the 17th century.

For it appears probable that had not the Puritan (Calvinist) minority—which seized power after the Civil War had ended with the destruction of the Stuart monarchy—overplayed its hand under Cromwell, the Commonwealth officially established in Great Britain between 1649 and 1660 would have proved permanent. As it turned out, the sequel justified the prediction made by Cromwell's Secretary of State, John Thurloe on the Protector's death on September 3rd, 1658: "Not his own strength, but our divisions will bring Charles Stuart back."

This prediction was fulfilled by the restoration of the Stuarts in 1660. The Stuarts, however, with their belief in divine right and their French notions of absolute monarchy on the Continental model proved intractable. These relatives of the "Sun King" Louis XIV were not willing to accept the permanent role of merovingian figureheads. It took another revolution, the self-styled "Glorious Revolution" of 1688-9 to shift them. But this time, taught by the radical excesses of the earlier revolution, the ruling class in Great Britain were not prepared again to risk the experiment of a republic which might again unloose subversive forces, dangerous to church and state, such as the Levellers, Diggers and Fifth Monarchy men had been during the Cromwellian era.

In 1689, the heroes of the "Glorious Revolution" decided upon a limited or constitutional monarchy in which "the king reigns but does not govern". After some political somersaults divertingly described by the contemporary anonymous author of *The Vicar of Bray*, the then

Whig rulers of England—later to be denominated by Disraeli as the "Venetian Oligarchy"—found an ideal figurehead in the Elector of Hanover, George I (1714-27), perhaps the most conspicuous of whose political virtues was that he did not speak a word of English and was thus compelled to leave the conduct of affairs entirely in the hands of his English advisers, Walpole *et al.*

From that now remote date "when George in pudding time came o'er", the English monarchy has remained a fairly stable institution only temporarily endangered by megalomania on the part of King George III and his Tory "friends", who between them provoked another revolution, but this time, fortunately

for the king and his satellites, in America and not England. Again the evolution of the House of Hanover itself can be divided into two periods, prior to 1870 and subsequently. For throughout the first of these consecutive periods, the monarchy was unpopular as an institution and despised generally on account of the often contemptible personal character of its royal representatives: of George IV (1820-30) in particular "the First Gentleman in Europe". The proletariat, newly evolved by the nascent industrial revolution read their Paine and sympathised with the French Revolution and no doubt relished Charles Bradlaugh's description of their German-imported dynasty as "small breast-bastarded wanderers". Nor were the bourgeoisie themselves much more favourably disposed towards their extravagant and lecherous monarchs.

The Four Georges

Thomas Carlyle described with obvious contempt, the coronation of William IV (1830-37) upon whose demise the *Times* acidly commented: "To the great majority of his subjects, the late King represented an object of mixed pity and contempt, the greater the pity the greater the contempt". Whilst ten years earlier, upon the demise of George IV, the same paper made the even more unkind comment: "If there is in these islands a single man or a single woman who has a good word to say of the late King, his or her name has not yet reached us".

In his *Four Georges*, Thackeray summed up the Georgian era as it appeared to its more enlightened contemporaries:

George the First, you know, was vile,
Viler, George the Second,
Has anyone ever heard
Of anyone like George the Third?
When George the Fourth to hell descended,
Then God be praised, the Georges ended.

Imperialism and the Monarchy

When the young Victoria succeeded to the throne in 1837, England appeared to be on the very brink of a social revolution on the model of the French; for the revolutionary Chartist movement was then at its zenith. But Clio, the muse of history has a fine sense of irony and revels in the unexpected! For Victoria's long reign proved eventually to represent the "golden century", both of the

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Future of the Monarchy

By F. A. RIDLEY

English monarchy and of the world empire over which it then presided.

For from about 1870, the creed of Imperialism took over, and the Empire needed a symbolic figurehead. Victoria, who in private life would have made an ideal and ideally conventional Victorian landlady in Folkestone or Bournemouth (had her "wicked uncles" the sons of George III only practised Victorian morality and begat *legitimate* children capable of succeeding to the throne, she would never have become queen) made an ideal imperial mascot. Disraeli crowned her as Empress of India (1875) and Rudyard Kipling, the Laureate *par excellence* of Empire and of its imperialist creed, sang the praises of "the Widow of Windsor". The republican agitation of Victoria's early years died away and the monarchy entered upon its "second spring".

This lasted down to the last decades which have seen the effective decomposition of the old Anglo-British Empire. Throughout this era of imperialism, the reigning monarch "by the Grace of God, King, Emperor of India" etc., was an unchallenged figurehead, and the institution of monarchy itself took on a unique character almost as sacrosanct as the holy oil which is still used to consecrate our monarchs. But one must not be deceived by appearances; for there was substance behind this show! For our modern monarchy, if still medieval in form, is imperialist in substance. Whilst the monarchy remained the symbol of Empire, it still remained strong. As recently as 1936, it survived the abdication of Edward VIII.

One must accordingly ask the question—in this post-imperialist era when the age of Palmerston, Disraeli and Kipling, is as dead as the dodo, or as Queen Anne—is there any future at all for the monarchy in Great Britain? It appears increasingly doubtful. The last few years have witnessed a growing volume of public criticism of this until-recently sacrosanct institution. Are these the proverbial straws which show the way the wind is blowing? Be that as it may, it would appear unlikely that this century of the common man will continue to tolerate the medieval atmosphere that inevitably clings to the pre-historic institution of kingship. Another generation of democratic evolution could well witness the end of Bradlaugh's House of Brunswick. For the historic causes that combined to shore up the then tottering Hanoverian dynasty after Victoria's succession, no longer operate today.

SOUTH AFRICAN RATIONALISTS HONOUR DR. ROUX

THE April issue of the South African *Rationalist* reports that Dr. Edward Roux was elected Honorary Life President of the Rationalist Association of South Africa and Chairman in absentia pending the Minister of Justice's permission for him to attend meetings. A unanimous vote of all present approved the sending of a letter to the Secretary of the Department of Justice requesting that the Minister permit Dr. Roux to continue as active Chairman of the Association.

Dr. Roux, Head of the Department of Botany at the University of the Witwatersrand, has been forbidden for the next five years to enter the premises of the University or any other educational institution in South Africa; to teach or instruct anyone except his own children in any subject (Dr. Roux's daughter is married); to enter any location or township reserved for Africans, Coloureds or Asians, or any factory; to attend any gathering—even a purely social one—or any meeting; to publish or prepare for publication in any form anything he writes on any subject; to attend any court of law unless required as a witness; to talk or write to any other banned person. He has also been confined to the Johannesburg magisterial area.

Philosophy of Science—Some Facets

9—MORE THAN DESCRIPTION

By DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

It is now widely accepted that scientific laws are descriptive in the sense discussed in the first article of this series. This implies that the job of science is merely to describe how the world behaves.

Some philosophers hold that human knowledge can never get beyond this descriptive phase and that we can never learn the ultimate nature of the world. Theories about the nature of things, they say, are metaphysical, cannot be verified and hence are pointless.

Before arguing this point let us ask whether science itself never passes beyond the strictly descriptive. The answer to this question appears to be "No", for scientists daily use known laws to predict patterns of events not yet observed. In fact, no scientist with a theory is ever regarded as quite respectable unless he can predict such unobserved events as a consequence of his theory.

For example, a water pipe is seen to fracture when its contents freeze. From this observed fact a budding scientist might put forward the theory that the fracture is due to the water expanding as it freezes. This theory can now be used to predict that, owing to this expansion a reduction of density will occur and that, as a consequence, when a fish pond freezes the ice will form at the surface rather than at the bottom. If our young theorist then goes to a fish pond in winter he will find his theory confirmed.

An observed pipe fracture has led to a theory about change of density, and the theory has been confirmed by an observed fishpond. The theorist has gone beyond his observation and description for, not having weighed the water and ice, he has not observed a change of density. By weighing he could, of course, check his theory directly. But there are more difficult cases.

A nuclear physicist has never seen a neutron, or an electron, or a gamma ray. What he has seen are a whole array of instrument readings and, perhaps, some results of the "experiments" at Hiroshima. But these readings and results are indirect confirmation of theories about neutrons, electrons and gammas which were put forward on the basis of earlier observed readings. As in the case of the theory about the density of ice, an unobserved phenomenon is invented as a bridge from one set of observations to another.

What is more interesting is that, unlike theories about ice, theories about particles are unlikely ever to be directly confirmed. No one will ever see an electron. The physicist has gone far beyond description. Is he talking metaphysics?

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND AND FREEMASONRY

SOME members of a Church of Scotland panel on doctrine take the view that total obedience to Christ precludes joining any such organisation as the masonic movement. It appeared to them, after a year's inquiry into the subject, that the initiate was required to commit himself to freemasonry in the way that a Christian should only commit himself to Christ (*The Guardian*, 10/5/65). As a whole, the panel agreed that the Church should remind those of its members who were freemasons that their masonic vows were not intended to be in any way at variance with their more solemn vows of membership in the Body of Christ.

How I Became a Humanist

By PHYLLIS GRAHAM

I SEEM to have been preoccupied with the idea of God for as long as I can remember. Even as a very small child my thought and emotions concerning Him were decidedly mixed! I can recall working out a kind of formula—perhaps at the age of between five and six—which went thus: Jesus is very nice, and the Holy Ghost isn't bad—but God the Father is simply horrid! From which I can only presume that I was haunted from the beginning by the archetypal Father-Figure in its most unpleasant form, and at the same time attracted by the magico-poetic mask that Christianity turns towards the innocent.

However, I managed to reconcile this split-image of the Deity with my own frantic need to create a dream-world, a shelter from the real world without, which always appeared to me hostile, cruel, painful and terrifying. I knew I was quite inadequate to cope with it. So I set up my poetic and mystical image of God on the altar of my fantasy-world, wove an intense "inner life" around it and founded a sanctuary there from the horridness and bitterness of life as I saw it. The sanctuary was not altogether inviolate, but it served me through the critical period of adolescence and probably saved me from disaster!

At the age of fourteen I came into contact—through a schoolfriend—with the Roman Catholic Church. It burst upon my imagination with all the glory of a transformation scene! It seemed the translation to reality of my own private world of poetic dreams and soothing security! I made up my mind at once to "enter the fold" and become one with the communion of saints. The Catholic world was as teeming with unseen presences, exciting possibilities, signs and wonders, as the Greek Golden Age of gods and nature-spirits, or the equally fascinating pages of Grimm's fairy tales—both of which I adored!

After a battle with my parents lasting two years, and a certain amount of lighthearted persecution from my schoolfellows, I was received into the Church on the day before Christmas Eve. I made my First Communion at the Midnight Mass, resplendent in white dress and veil and fêted with a grand "white supper" afterwards by my Catholic friends. It was all very enchanting and magnificent and I felt like a princess in a fairy tale, and the world no longer seemed hostile and terrible, but a warm, cosy place watched over by beneficent angels and saints, no corner of it untouched by the glory they reflected from God.

In this happy state I remained for four years and three months. In many ways life was as unkind to me as ever, but what did it matter? The only real world was the world of the spirit; I had only to abide there faithfully and I was invincible. Besides, was there not Heaven to come? Life was but a period of trial; its sorrows would end, and the joys of the spirit world would blossom into happiness that was eternal.

True, there was that fantastically incredible and horrifying dogma of eternal punishment, which didn't seem to fit into the general cosiness and benevolence. I knew, years later, that I had never really assented to it. But at that time it only nagged at me spasmodically like a hollow tooth, and I could quickly get relief from such sedatives as contemplating the infinite mercy of God, or being assured in soothing tones by priests or fellow-Catholics, "You don't need to think about Hell, it's not for you.

Think only of the love of God and leave the rest to His infinite goodness."

The Catholic atmosphere in which I now lived, moved and had my being was as sweet and luscious and satisfying as the honey in a fly-trap . . . and just as deadly. But this latter fact I had no idea of, and with my fellow-flies I wallowed happily, as deluded as they that I was feeding on the honey of Paradise, the manna of the angels. More deluded, in fact, than most of them, for the desire was growing in me to be utterly immersed, lost and immolated in the sticky sweetness. I wanted to become a nun!

Lots of girls did at that time, owing to the widespread popularity of the famous *Autobiography* of Sainte Thérèse, the so-called "Little Flower of Jesus", the young French girl who became a Carmelite nun at the age of fifteen. We all chattered incessantly about the wonder and importance of being specially "called and chosen" by God, and exchanged our pious dreams and imaginary visions, and hinted darkly at hidden personal penances such as chains, hairshirts, disciplines, etcetera. All this was greatly encouraged by the devout but rather callow young priest who was our Director, and who called and signed himself "The Slave of Mary". He had, in fact, a pure and touching solicitude for the female sex, which didn't endear him to our bluff and down-to-earth Irish rector, who had no patience whatever with what may be called the fancy trimmings of religion, and very little for the curate and his faithful troop of devout virgins. We, however, thought he was simply wonderful, and called ourselves, like him, the "Slaves of Mary", and treasured with the greatest devotion the lists of mortifications he dished out to us. We used to discuss earnestly how many of these we had practised, and I remember one girl being in floods of tears, gasping out that she'd done something too awful to contemplate . . . it turned out she'd lost her list of mortifications coming over the heath! Whoever picked it up must have been either mystified, horrified or plain tickled to death!

But all this came to an end with drastic suddenness. Two weeks after my twenty-first birthday I entered as a postulant in the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. It was the earliest moment I could have done so, for naturally my parents were dead against it, and I could not obtain their permission. I left home—as I thought then for ever—knowing they were broken hearted, and that in all probability I should not even see them again. It is a moment of my life that even now I cannot bear to dwell upon, though the details of that parting on an April Sunday afternoon are burnt into my memory.

The great enclosure doors of the convent swung open to admit me; four faceless dark figures stood awaiting me in the dark enclosure square. For a moment I was petrified. It was a plunge into the black unknown . . . Only pride kept me from turning tail and dashing back to the familiar sweetness of my honey-pot! And indeed if I had known then how ruthlessly and utterly that sweetness was to be denied to me from henceforth and for ever, and replaced by unmitigated bitterness, I should have turned back without hesitation. The next twenty years of my life, at any rate, would have been vastly different!

But I did not know. The moment of terror was succeeded by a moment of elation. The faceless ones had lifted the black veils that covered them. The doors shut

(Continued on page 166)

This Believing World

THAT trenchant critic of everything he does not like—rightly or wrongly—Mr. Bernard Levin, in the *Daily Mail* (5/5/65), says, "I am definitely the last man left alive who knows that Voltaire did not say, 'I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it' or anything remotely comparable". If Mr. Levin had read THE FREETHINKER regularly, he might have noticed that the truth was repeatedly pointed out—even by the present writer—who is still alive!

★

VOLTAIRE always felt that a live dog was better than a dead lion, and he would never have been so foolish as to defend to the death the right to utter rubbish. But if Mr. Levin thinks a mere denial of the famous aphorism will kill it, we're afraid he'll have to think again.

★

A DAY later in the book section of the same journal, was the heading, "Who the devil is Fowler any way?" The question was answered with a fine appreciation of one of the most famous men who has ever helped us to write English, the author of *Modern English Usage*; and there can be few writers who would not acknowledge their indebtedness to this remarkable work. But what we noticed in the article was that the *Daily Mail* was not afraid to point out that Fowler was an Agnostic, a fact which few of his readers were likely to know.

★

IF THE "Saturday Reflection" were to come to an end in the *London Evening News*, we would certainly miss our weekly treat of religious imbecility. Its latest discovery (1/5/65) is that "the earliest Christians, the members of the infant Church . . . knew at first only one fact about Christ: that he had risen from death on the third day . . .". It is "the keystone of the soaring arch of the Christian faith". This was "the stupendous truth" to which the Christian Church owes its existence. And yet, as Gibbon pointed out, the story is quite untrue, for the existence of the Church was purely "secular" and had no more to do with anything "divine" than a custard tart.

★

WE NOTE that in the magazine of the South London Industrial Mission, Dr. M. Lane, a lecturer in chemistry as well as a Methodist preacher, claims that, "the modern so-called materialism is merely a means of making it possible to uphold the values of Christianity." How right he is! Bradlaugh's *Plea for Atheism* must have been an invaluable adjunct in promoting "true" Christianity, while Paine's *Age of Reason* really supports the Bible and should be read by all Christians, particularly teenagers. Does Dr. Lane maintain such sentiments in the pulpit?

★

IN THAT happy land once packed with Christianity, Scotland, a deep note of pessimism has, alas, crept in. According to the *Daily Express* (3/5/65) the very Rev. G. Macleod, a former Moderator, sadly declared, "The old bastions are falling down . . . The established Churches of Scotland and England are losing about 15,000 members a year . . . The figure tends annually to increase." But the gem of his doleful pessimism is "Any layman or any parson can believe precisely what he likes." But surely the precious Word of God stands firmly as the Rock of all Ages?

★

THE Rev. K. B. Cresswell, rector of St. John the Baptist Church, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, has made himself very unpopular with Spiritualists by accusing them of a "refined form of ancestor worship". Spiritualism tries, Mr. Cress-

well wrote in his parish magazine, "to satisfy personal cravings for certainty in spiritual things". And he described it as "Christianity without the Cross", a "materialistic religion which tells nothing about God". Medium Gordon Higginson, head of Longton's strong Spiritualist church accused Mr. Cresswell of ignorance and envy. The rector did not know what he was talking about. "He has probably written this," Mr. Higginson said, "because our church is full every week and his is not".

Sister Angela's Night of Terror

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

"The beasts!" Sister Charity hissed, "why don't the young men offer us their places?"

Sister Angela shuddered. "I prefer", she said coldly, "to stand—when men are about".

Sister Charity was all agog. "Oh please tell me . . ."

Hanging from the strap, like some unwashable thing, Sister Angela told of the night at Bamford station. Half an hour to wait on the dark platform with whatever else might be hiding there! "One reads", Sister Angela intoned, "so many stories!"

Her inspiration had been that for one penny a lady might buy privacy and protection. Stiff and patient she had stood in her penny sanctuary, her eyes on the luminous dial of her watch.

A minute and a half to go—not much margin for a misfortune. Why, she even heard the train. Time to go out. And Sister Angela had struggled with the catch of the door, and the train had rattled and roared. In the strong reek of the sulphurous smoke, the door had stuck fast.

A porter was shouting, milk cans banging, and Sister Angela was beginning to scream. It wasn't dignified but . . . yes, she screamed louder. Like a parrot yelling in a hall of mirrors. Chug-chug! the train was moving, leaving the station, leaving Sister Angela shut in her sanctuary.

Sister Charity touched Sister Angela's arm. "You poor darling . . ."

Sister Angela's eyes clouded. "I just couldn't stop—shouting I mean. I went on and on; and then, when everything was quiet, the one porter heard me".

Sister Charity wanted to know the nature of the beast—a sniggler?

"Thank God!" Sister Angela exclaimed, "an honest countryman. He tried to make it easier for me by pretending to be interested only in the . . . er . . . technicalities of the case. He got the door open and tactfully talked fast about springs and levers and so on. He showed me what had gone wrong with the lock?"

"And so?"

"And so we both got locked in! Imagine the horror of it! No prospect of rescue till the first train in the morning. Yet the porter was one of Nature's gentlemen. He wanted me to sit down . . . I mean, you do understand, dear Sister, why I'm the one woman in the world who's grateful for a strap?"

RELIGIOUS HOWLERS

The following howlers were related by an RI teacher in a secondary modern school:

1. Moses's mother saw to it that he was brought up as a Christian.
2. Paul went to Damascus to persecute the Protestants.
3. Jewish law lays down that boys and girls must be circumcised.
4. (Asked for two or three of the Ten Commandments) "Thou shalt not admit adultery".
5. The Archangel Gabriel told Mary that he would be Jesus's father.

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.
London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.
(Tower Hill), Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.
Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.
Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.
North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.
Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Richmond and Twickenham Humanist Group Community Centre, Sheen Road, Richmond, Thursday, May 27th, 8 p.m.: GEORGE E. GORMAN, "The Faith and Practice of the Quakers".
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, May 23rd, 11 a.m.: H. L. BEALES, "The Mainsprings of Social Policy".

Notes and News

PHYLLIS K. GRAHAM, author of "How I Became a Humanist"—the first part of which appears this week—spent twenty years as a nun in a strictly enclosed order. Miss Graham, who first delivered her paper to the newly-formed Worthing Humanist Group, hopes further to use her literary talents for the advancement of Freethought and Humanism.

★

DR. COGGAN, the Archbishop of York, brought Anglican greetings to the annual assembly of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland which was held this year in Leeds. And naturally enough his theme was Christian unity. If ever there was a time to close ranks and "only do separately what we simply cannot do together, it is today", he said (*The Guardian*, 7/5/65). God was summoning Christians to unity and "we dare not shut our eyes to that summons". Why? Because secularism and materialism were attacking the Churches and the world right, left and centre. Dr. Coggan's visit—the first by an Archbishop for 14 years—was "warmly received".

★

THIS week the two Convocations of the Church of England were meeting in joint session to consider the views of the dioceses, collected over the past two years, on proposals for reunion with the other dominant Free Church, Methodism. And it was announced by the Methodist press office that early results of voting in 34 synods showed overwhelming acceptance of closer relations with the Anglican Church. The latter, too, could report "strong evidence" from the dioceses of "a widespread desire in the Church to find a way to union with the Methodists". But there was (according to the Church Information Office publication, *Relations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church*)

"no clear mandate . . . which would justify our recommending to the Convocations that the proposals in the *Report of Conversations* should be accepted without elucidation and amplification". The *Report of Conversations*, incidentally, were the inter-Church talks of 1956-63.

★

A Roman Catholic writer on unity, the Rev. Michael Gallon, was unkind enough to declare, however, that the Churches of the Reformation were "spent forces"; and that for the uncommitted the alternatives were "either Catholicism or agnostic Humanism". Father Gallon (in an editorial in the *Catholic Gazette*, quoted in the *Catholic Herald*, 30/4/65) was at pains to point out that he made these statements in a "spirit of charity and ecumenism"; indeed, he consoled the Protestants with the news that through ecumenism they could be saved by the Church of Rome. But Father Gallon's brutal frankness was not all directed at the Protestants. It was easy, he said, to overestimate the state of his own Church's health when one saw "quite a number of new churches, schools and parishes". But there were thousands of non-practising Catholics all over the country, and many thousands who were staying away from the Sacraments. There had also recently been a steady decline in the number of vocations to the priesthood—all the more serious when the "nominal roll" of Catholics had gone up by a million.

★

NOR was this the end of the sorry story. The convert rate which, Father Gallon admitted, was "paltry enough compared with the lapsation rate", seemed to be on the decline. In fact, enthusiasm for the conversion of England, which had been prominent after the war and had given birth to the Catholic Enquiry Centre, seemed to have "vanished". A "certain disillusionment" had set in.

★

POPE John's encyclicals were based explicitly on an appeal to natural law, the Rev. Cahal B. Daly, Reader in Scholastic Philosophy at Queen's University, Belfast, told the *Christus Rex* conference held in Cahir, Tipperary recently. It was also in virtue of the same natural law that Pope John (in *Mater et Magistra*) had condemned contraception as a means of population control, Father Daly added (*Catholic Herald*, 30/4/65). The transmission of human life, the late Pope had pointed out, was "subject to the all-holy, inviolable and immutable laws of God which a man ignores and disobeys to his cost". And Father Daly recalled the words of Cardinal Suenens in 1962. What was condemned as intrinsically immoral yesterday will not become moral tomorrow", the Cardinal had said. "No one should entertain any confused doubt or false hope on the point. The Church has not decided that these [contraceptive] practices are immoral; she has merely confirmed what the moral law already said about them".

★

FATHER Daly then quoted the Bishop of Exeter, Dr. R. C. Mortimer, who also regarded the use of contraceptives as wrong "though conceding, with unconcealed reluctance" that "it is also really probable that in some abnormal circumstances they may be right". This distinctly "relative" interpretation of the allegedly rigid natural moral law in no way deterred Father Daly, who hailed Dr. Mortimer as "One of the greatest of living Anglican theologians". What was significant, we were told, was that Dr. Mortimer by no means shared the "apparent enthusiasm for contraceptives which seems to characterise some recent writing by Catholics". Those Catholics are, we suggest, rather more sensitive to the sufferings of Catholic wives than the confirmed celibate Reader in scholastic Philosophy at Queen's.

How I Became a Humanist

(continued from page 163)

behind me with a sullen clang, but the faces that smiled at me were welcoming and beautiful, and they bent to kiss me . . . I felt I was received into the company of angels. As I was taken through the long, sunlit cloisters to the cell appointed for my use, I saw trees and lawns and flowers through the graceful windows. The pear blossom was in bloom . . .

Then numbness descended upon me, and I went through all the strange experiences that followed as if I were someone else: none of it seemed real, but only parts of a disjointed dream. And indeed the world in which I found myself was more fantastic than any dream-world I could have imagined. A Carmelite prioress had once told me that life in Carmel was "topsy-turveydom", and certainly it was rather like viewing one's familiar world standing on one's head. All the ordinary actions of living had to be learned anew: eating, drinking, sleeping, walking, conversing, working—everything was done in an entirely different way and looked at from an entirely different point of view. But above all, prayer, and everything that had intimately to do with the service of God, was to be learned from the beginning as an infant learns to live. All this naturally forced one back to the weakness and dependence of infancy . . . it was the inception of the lifelong process of the monastic ideal . . . the crushing of intellect and will into utter submission to the Will of God, through perfect obedience to superiors and complete acceptance of every detail of religious life. It is the Roman Church's conception of the fullest meaning of Christ's words: "Unless ye become as little children ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." And it is, of course, though in a less perfect and absolute degree, the selfsame submission to authority which she demands from *all* her members.

In those days of my complete ignorance I accepted this as the ideal I wished to attain; I was afraid, certainly, and dismayed by my own weakness; but I was not appalled, as I am today. I had no notion whatever of the terrible power this complete domination places in the hands of the Roman Church, and the terrible weapons she manufactures from it to gain still more and more ascendancy over the minds and souls of men, over nations and governments, over world affairs and every department of politics, over the intimacies of family life and the fate of the individual. I did not see myself then as a tiny cog in a vast machine that straddles the whole earth, working in secret ways of which most men are quite unconscious, though every human existence is in some degree affected, and most of us are more involved than we shall ever know.

And of course I did not know *myself*. I thought that I was in love with God, and that all the childish anger and disapproval I had once felt against Him were cast out for ever by the power of faith. I knew that life for me was difficult, and always would be; that I was difficult myself and would probably have a harder struggle than most to persevere; but I did not know that I was an inveterate rebel to whom submission was impossible. I did not know that my intellect would refuse to be silenced, drugged, starved into final acquiescence. That it would torment me with its questioning, day in, day out, through sleepless nights, over and above the anguish and labour of trying to submit my will, and the enduring of all the pains and privations of an austere and solitary life.

And the life in Carmel was austere and solitary in a very extreme way. Not only the joys of the sense and the pleasures of life, but the consolations of religion itself,

were utterly and ruthlessly withdrawn. We spent our long hours of meditation and chanting of the Divine Office, not in an ornate church with a flower-decked altar and a comforting red sanctuary lamp and many objects of piety to console us, but in the bare, long, barn-like room that ran sideways from the sanctuary of the public chapel, cut off from it and the altar by a double iron grille and a black gauze curtain, and on our side by heavy black shutters that were never opened except during Mass and Benediction. That blank, black wall continually before our eyes was indeed symbolic of the frightful gulf of emptiness into which mind, heart and soul were plunged. There was no music to soften the desperation of it; we intoned the office on two notes only, and all instrumental music was forbidden.

This dark night of the senses was equalled by a dark night of the soul, for we had no sermons or retreats to help us in our solitude. We were cut off, finally and absolutely, not only from all contact with the exterior world, but even from the lawful consolations of spiritual life. I believe it was the most extreme form of renunciation possible to humanity, because it cut down to the very roots of being and there was no outlet whatsoever, no means of escape from the inner and ultimate desolation.

In fact, this particular form of extreme spiritual austerity was not altogether approved by the Church authorities. I believe it has since been modified, after long years of warfare between the various schools of opinion within the order and the ecclesiastical courts. This dissension was going on all the time I was in the convent, which did not add to my peace of mind. It also gave me my first inkling of the intrigue perpetually seething under the surface of the Roman Church, at all times and in every place of her dominion. It appears to be inherent in her nature.

What I have described hitherto was common suffering to every member of the community, in more or less degree of intensity. But each one had her own particular difficulties to cope with, and these became evident very swiftly once the doors of enclosure had clanged to on the outside world, leaving the human soul alone with itself. In my own case, once I had mastered the routine and more or less adapted my physical life to conditions of hardship and strain, and harnessed my will as best I could to the demands of religious obedience, the demon of thought and questioning awoke and sprang up stronger than ever. And it was primarily concerned with that old, ill-digested, secretly refuted problem of Hell and eternal punishment. Since, according to Saint Teresa of Avila, our foundress, we had placed ourselves in the mouth of Hell as buffers between sinners and the avenging wrath of God, the problem could hardly be evaded! And beyond lay the whole torturing enigma of the Origin of Evil . . . more and more impossible to reconcile with the image of an All-Good and Omnipotent God presented to us for our love and adoration.

(To be concluded)

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

New Victoria Hotel, Corporation Street, Birmingham
Reception in the New Victoria Hotel on
Saturday, June 5th at 7 p.m.

THE CONFERENCE
(for Members only)

will be held on Sunday, June 6th in two sessions:
10 a.m.—12.30 p.m. and 2 p.m.—4.30 p.m.

Walls of Prejudice

By F. H. SNOW

VERY few people are without prejudices, and few are aware that they have them. Most, in fact, believe themselves to have unbiased minds in their assessment of policies and persons. Few people see the necessity to probe for flaws in their views, in order to amend them should honesty demand it. The great majority prejudge systems of thought and ways of life alien to theirs. Instead of subjecting them to the scrutiny of normal reason, they condemn them in ratio to the degree of nonconformity with their own traditions. A wall of prejudice stands between them and intelligent consideration of contrasting creeds and ideologies—and, be it said with equal truth, of their own.

Most religious folk, for instance, if happening to read this article, would not even try to follow my train of reasoning. Catholics would shy at the mere suggestion that they should endeavour to look at their Church and its dogma through the mental lens of a Freethinker or Protestant. To try to understand the way of thinking of such persons would be going off the strict path laid down for them. It would be deviating from the pre-judgment of things non-Catholic, contrived for them by their priesthood, lest they might conceive in them a grain of reason which could weaken the fabric of their faith.

They will, if challenged, and if not too ignorant or illiterate, declare that they are not forbidden to use their reasoning powers concerning the validity of their doctrines or the divine appointment of their Church. Did not Thomas Aquinas, that great medieval saint and pillar of holy wisdom, use the very weapon of reason to demonstrate the truth of belief in a Divine Creator, and, *ipso facto*, of belief in the authenticity of the Church? He had appointed to instruct humanity? Was not St. Thomas's argument that the earth and its inhabitants could not have existed without a First Cause, and that only God could be that First Cause, the very essence of reason? The Church had fully endorsed Aquinas, and sanctioned appeal to reason as well as assurance through faith.

But Catholics are only free to appeal to the reasoning approved by their Church. Their mode of thought is predetermined however reluctant they may be to recognise it. To doubt "sacred truths" is sinful and imperils eternal welfare. The faithful may discuss Catholic dogma but not question it. They may reason about it, but not entertain the slightest doubt of it. They have liberty to exercise their reasoning capacities in support of the faith but not against it. In other words, a great wall of prejudice has been constructed that virtually insulates them from the germ of critical thought on the subject of their religious belief. What chance, then, has any freethought article of being read by Roman Catholics with honest effort to discern something of reason in its premises? What chance has the normal, emotionally-submissive Catholic of gaining a rational view of his world and the gods of human fancy?

Has the Jehovah's Witness, the Salvationist, the Muslim, any better prospect of glimpsing the falsity of religious belief? Minus the spurious liberty to reason that Catholics are permitted, they nevertheless refuse to admit even the semblance of common sense to creep into their evaluation of what they have been taught are sacred truths. The Salvationist and Witness advance their religious ecstasies as all-sufficient evidence of God believing them to be vouchsafings of his holy spirit. Other evidence is need-

less and the secular case and all contrasting creeds are ruled out of consideration by the prejudgment resulting from the perfectly logical exaltations of religion-steeped minds. The "great goodness" feeling obtrudes a rampart of prejudice between them and independent thought on the subject of their faith.

Muslim and Judaic zealots, and other non-Christian religionists are, in general, immunised against rational thought concerning their beliefs through lifelong subjection to the discipline of ritual, the unthinkable of disregarding which renders unthinkable any questioning of the *bona fides* of the religion it integrates. A mindless loyalty shelters from the contagion of reason all but an infinitesimal minority of the ritual-dominated.

In the political sphere, the case is not very different. Here too, the closed mind is evident. Traditional loyalties and narrow self-interests mar the instinct for fair-play—the virtues of giving credit where that is palpably due—of acknowledging whatever merit should be conceded to political adversary or party. Sweet reason seldom gets a hearing. The minds of both religious and political partisans rarely strive against the bias that binds them to set views.

On the face of it the humanist ideal of a rational world society has small chance of realisation. Freethinkers might well despair, but for the great decline, in ratio to the earth's population, of both political and religious zealots. Our hopes must rest on the acceleration of that decline, and the consequent expansion of liberal thinking amongst the uncommitted. We should work ardently for this, and the reduction to a negligible force of the paramount prejudices that antagonise mankind, prior to their eventual demise.

Can the Freethinker himself, pledged to oppose all forms of fettered thought, be prey to that which he condemns? He can indeed be untrue to his label, and unfit to tilt at the bias-steeped, by omitting to probe his own views with ruthless scrutiny, and failing to observe the basic free-thought principle of according to opponents the greatest possible advantage consistent with reason. As Rationalists, we need to unfailingly guard against the fault that bedevils the vast majority of human beings, and shuts them from the light of objective truth behind walls of prejudice.

Two Humanist Newsletters

IN an April newsletter, the first it is hoped of many giving an up-to-date report of the progress being made towards encouraging Humanists to work in youth clubs and, ultimately, to promoting the formation of Humanist youth organisations, the Humanist Youth Service Committee says that, while it is making valiant efforts to meet the needs of young people, it still suffers from lack of full-time youth leaders, voluntary helpers and experimental projects.

The Committee believes that it is generally felt within the Humanist movement that "Humanists have an important role to play in relation to young people". We can easily forget, it says, "only a minority of youngsters enjoy further education and that many homes fail to provide the stimulus and guidance which are necessary if a young person is to develop to the full his or her potentialities. In this situation, Humanists have a clear responsibility to play their part in improving the position either by

offering their services to local youth clubs, or initiating the formation of youth clubs with the help of other Humanists".

It is certain, the newsletter continues, that many young people would find Humanism "refreshing and meaningful" after "the nebulous mysticism of Christianity which is offered to them at school and in Church youth clubs". It must be admitted, however, that the Churches have provided clubs where previously no such facilities existed. Indeed, in areas where the local authorities have not started their own youth clubs, the Churches have a monopoly. If Humanists care about young people, they too must play their part.

There is plenty of scope for voluntary work of all kinds, and the Humanist Youth Service Committee will be pleased to hear from anyone who is interested. The address is: c/o 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W.8.

Another April newsletter, from the Dundee Humanist Group is addressed to those in the area who may not find it congenial or convenient to attend meetings or take part in organisational duties. It expresses the hope that those who have ideas or news of events likely to interest Humanists will send them whenever they can and thus provide the necessary material for the publication. Those who are active in the Group and regard its existence as important or, indeed, imperative for the advance of Humanist ideas are willing to undertake the work of publication.

It cannot be too strongly stressed, the newsletter says, that "the local and national press are by no means on our side". It was here that the justification was found for attempting a publication. "We would be unreasonable to expect papers with an outlook rooted in Establishment concepts enthusiastically to help us pursue our very different purposes. What publicity we can get through them must be expected to be scanty and grudging". Freedom of publication could, however, be exploited to advantage and readers were called on to make the newsletter a viable and permanent feature of the Dundee scene. The editor is E. G. Macfarlane, 11 Harefield Road, Dundee.

CORRESPONDENCE

A BRICK

Recently THE FREETHINKER has devoted much space to articles on the mythical Christian founder Jesus Christ which would be more appropriate to some religious broadsheets. We have had Solomon Zeitlin's views from the point of view of Judaism, Paul Winter's from Christianity. How about Cardinal Heenan's?

Not a week's issue passes without some reference to the Christian god (attributed with a capital G in THE FREETHINKER) and discussing, controverting points of theology and similar rubbish. It has been said that the denier of gods recognises the existence of gods by his very denial of it. It would seem that the contributors to THE FREETHINKER substantiate this.

Can we have less preoccupation with the Christian's god and their holy book and demonstrate atheism positively by opening THE FREETHINKER to articles on cosmology, up to date advances in psychology and psychiatry, and an examination of atheistic advances in the fields of education, medicine and sociology?

Or is THE FREETHINKER stuck for all time with Bradlaugh's matrix of polemicising—justifiable in his days.

B. J. CLIFTON.

A BOUQUET

Allow me to congratulate Mr. G. R. Goodman on his splendid article of April 30th.

This is a feature for which there is real need, its value increased by simplicity of presentation and brevity! We appear to be getting "geared up" in our opposition to religion. Mr. Goodman performs a sterling service to atheism and freethought by equipping our young adherents with the salient essentials for the demolition of the theologians' case, and the ultimate creation of a constitution based on secularism and freethought!

Most sincere thanks to Mr. Goodman for his splendid article, may we have more of them!

H. FAIRHURST.

THE PROBLEM OF PAIN

Mr. R. Smith in THE FREETHINKER (7/5/65) says that "the problem of pain is as much a problem for the Rationalist as it is for the Christian". Surely there is a vast difference between the outlook of the Rationalist and that of the Christian on the question of suffering. The Christian has to try and reconcile two irreconcilables—an omnipotent, almighty God Who is Love and the terrible suffering of many who have done nothing themselves to bring about this agony and pain. The Rationalist, on the other hand, can point to definite causes for this pain such as the action of a drunken driver in crippling a little child.

What matters however to a person in intense agony is not the cause of the pain but its removal. If I am told that I am suffering from an incurable cancer I shall not be interested in a scientific disquisition on the causes of cancer. What will matter to me is that one little word—"incurable".

While we are fortunate enough not to be saddled with an incurable disease we should both enjoy life and try and help those—as far as we can—who either have to face great physical suffering themselves or have to see those whom they love in great pain or are beset with mental problems.

Mrs. Kit Mouat is not an escapist—she is a true realist in her affirmation that we "must be pro-life all the way".

The note of optimism she sounds is surely the expression of a true Humanist outlook on life.

RONALD ADKINS.

In reply to R. Smith (7/5/65), I would remind him that "sin" is ineradicable in the nature of imperfect beings, and that he is thus implying that we should abandon cancer research; which would be even less consoling to a cancer victim!

If R. Smith's views on cancer are correct, then will he please tell me how I, an Atheist, ought to thank God for making me so free from sin that I have not currently got cancer?

Rationalists are not afraid of the concept or discussion of death and destruction. Life, however, is short, and during our brief glimmer upon the stage, we would do better to make happier our audiences, than to measure coffin-worms.

ERIC S. BARKER.

ATHEISM ON AMERICAN TV

I feel sure that it will be of interest to the readers of THE FREETHINKER to learn that, on April 25th of this year, I made a twenty-five minute rebuttal telecast of an attack on atheism and against Atheists which, early this year, had been made by a Roman Catholic priest, a Father Ellwood E. Keiser of the Paulist Fathers. I made the rebuttal over TV Station KPIX, the leading television station in the San Francisco Bay area. On the following day (April 26th) I made a videotape at the same station which was a ten-minute talk in support of atheism and a short interview. This is to be broadcast on May 2nd. Late in May or early June I am scheduled to make a thirty-minute talk over KPIX in support of atheism as a point of view and as a way of life.

By making all this broadcast-time available to me, free of charge, the management of Station KPIX has set a good example for the other broadcasting stations of the United States to follow, and certainly the management of KPIX deserves a lot of credit for doing so.

TV Guide, America's leading television periodical, publicised my rebuttal of April 25th, referred to above.

ROBERT H. SCOTT.

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with foreword by the late Lord Alexander

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The Freethinker



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MAY DAY has been a recognised feast of labour for three-quarters of a century—ever since 1889 when the Second (Socialist) International first officially pronounced it to be such. Since that seemingly distant date, the importance of the working class has greatly increased politically and industrially, and the official recognition given to May Day has increased also. In several continental lands it is already a recognised public holiday devoted in particular

to the recognition of the dignity of labour. For in this respect “we are all Socialists nowadays”, as a Victorian Liberal, Sir William Harcourt, once phrased it. Even German Fascism, officially dubbed National Socialism, had its feast of labour; and by what must surely be one

of the most monstrous paradoxes in recorded history, the ghastly Auschwitz extermination centre bore on its tragic portals of death, the sublime motto, *Arbeit macht Frei*, “Labour makes Free”.

Rome and May Day

In this year of grace, 1965, an even more ancient and ubiquitous totalitarian state than the Third Reich has, it appears, also decided to extend its august patronage to the traditional feast of labour. For we read in the *Dublin Sunday Press* (2/5/65) the interesting and significant news that: “The Pope received thousands of Catholic workers in general audience in St. Peter’s Basilica yesterday and said some groups made labour a source of social hatred and passion instead of brotherly love and the exaltation of noble sentiments”.

“The Pontiff said there were some who made labour an argument of permanent and programmatic social struggle instead of harmonious and positive co-operation in justice and liberty.

“The Pope urged them to pray that the justice and peace desired by the great humble artisan of Nazareth may re-flower again in a Christian way in the world of labour”.

Here surely, is a come-down for the Second Person in the Catholic Trinity. From God Almighty to a mere artisan.

Rome and the Social Order

The past and present relationship between the Church of Rome and the working class—the proletariat in the Marxist sense of the word—is not only interesting in itself, but also is a pointer to the permanent social strategy of Rome *vis-a-vis* the contemporary secular social order. For, as is surely common knowledge by this time, I have never subscribed to the ideological myth so sedulously cultivated by the Church that (as befits an institution of divine origin) it represents today, and has always represented in the past, an unchanging, rigidly immobile institution—*semper eadem* (always the same). It would assuredly be the greatest recorded miracle to stand perfectly still and unaltered throughout 2,000 years of unceasing change elsewhere!

Far from such being the case, Rome has always moved as times changed though sometimes, it is true, rather belatedly. As, for example, at the Reformation, where it is

perhaps arguable that reform from within might have averted the revolution from without if the Papacy had listened to Erasmus *before* Luther appeared upon the scene. But still, the Church has always eventually moved. This recurring fact is as true in the realm of social, as of intellectual, phenomena.

In point of fact, the sociological evolution of the Papacy is in some ways more intriguing than its sometimes spectacular intellectual somersaults, as in the case of Galileo and the heliocentric astronomy first condemned and then finally accepted by Rome. For in the sociological sphere, Rome has successfully recognised in theory and co-operated with in fact, the social orders

commonly termed chattel-slavery, feudalism, capitalism and even communism. Only a few specialists are aware that in the 17th and 18th centuries in a republic of Paraguay in South America, the Jesuits practised for a century and a half a system of economic collectivism, without trade, private property or even money (love of which was the “root of all evil”). This was a social order far more communistic than are any of the present so-called Communist states east of the Iron Curtain, none of which so far at least appears to have transcended the limits of state socialism (cf R. Cunningham Graham, *A Vanished Arcadia*).

In the social as well as in the theological sphere, Rome has changed repeatedly, and one can relevantly add in this connection that all the signs point to another major sociological change in the near future.

The Social Encyclicals

The current phase of papal social policy may be said to have begun on May 15th, 1891, with the famous Encyclical Letter on the Condition of the Working Classes, by Pope Leo XIII (1879-1903), known, as is customary from its opening words, *Rerum Novarum*.

In this pioneer encyclical, the Pope cautiously surveyed the new social conditions first adumbrated by the Industrial Revolution in England in the 18th century and domiciled upon the European Continent during the 19th century. Leo’s diagnosis was radical: “a few rich men have laid upon the labouring poor, a yoke little better than slavery itself”—an apt enough description of Victorian capitalism. But his conclusions were limited to pious exhortations, plus a vague wish for a more equitable distribution of property. Subsequent papal encyclicals have not really gone much beyond the conclusions of *Rerum Novarum*. Indeed, the best known one, *Quadragesimo Anno* (i.e. in the 40th year after *Rerum Novarum*—May 15th, 1931) was much more reactionary, and openly pro-fascist in tone.

A New Relic

Rome never puts all her cards on the table at once. However, it seems clear by now that the outstanding political fact about our “century of the common man”, is the emergence of the working class in both the political and the economic fields. The Church of Rome which, whether infallible or merely experienced, is realistic in practical

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Carpenter of Nazareth

By F. A. RIDLEY

affairs—as its long and chequered evolution has proved—evidently recognises this fact, and her actions increasingly prove it. For already we have the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, and now we have this May Day message of Pope Paul on “the great, humble artisan of Nazareth”.

That cynical old humbug, Dean Inge, once shrewdly pointed out that the Church only discovered the workers *after* they got the vote! However, they have got it now and Rome evidently is cognisant of this fact. During the 19th century, the ever adaptable Vatican dropped feudalism like a hot brick and switched over to the support of capitalism, whose pioneers it had burned alive for usury during the Middle Ages. Will the 20th century witness another switch over to the rising power of labour? Be that as it may, we are evidently going to hear a lot more about the “humble, great carpenter of Nazareth”. Perhaps he will begin a new fashion in relics. In place of the nails of the “True Cross”, by now surely somewhat rusty, or the Holy Shroud of Turin, by now surely somewhat moth-eaten we may expect some genuine proletarian relics—Jesus’s saw or his working clothes. Best of all some pious archaeologist may eventually unearth a trade union card of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Nazareth Branch, paid up member, Jesus Christ.

Then Rome would indeed be with it!

Philosophy of Science—Some Facets

10—SCIENTISTS AND SCEPTICS

By DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

IN the previous article it was suggested that although scientific laws are descriptive the scientist, in discovering those laws, goes beyond the limits of pure description when he assumes the existence of certain unobserved things or the happenings of certain unobserved events. Sets of instrument readings are explained in terms of unseen particles and their interactions.

In an attempt to deny this conclusion and to show that science is purely descriptive, that it tells us “how” but never “why”, some philosophers of science argue that unobserved particles or events are not to be thought of as something existing but only as a convenient way of talking about instrument readings. What sounds like a theory about particles is really a theory about readings, the particles are helpful “symbols” or “shorthand” which happens to make the theory easier to write down.

This denial of the scientist’s right to believe in anything but directly observed happenings is sometimes expanded into a more general philosophy. This view states that the nature of the world must be described only in terms of what is observed. From this outlook it is but a short step to the inspiring doctrine that nothing exists but one’s own observations.

It has been one of the more useful functions of Marxist philosophy to stand in opposition to this subjectivist trend in the philosophy of science—a trend which lends support to the irrationalist existentialist philosophies which are now being used to bolster religious beliefs that are impossible to defend rationally.

Although our activities in relation to the outside world may not, as Marxists maintain, prove its existence—total scepticism is logically impregnable—they make its existence a reasonable working hypothesis. It is a hypothesis used by philosophers of science when they are hailing a taxi or eating their breakfast. They become sceptics only when they are lecturing.

General Delgado

READERS of this bulletin will have been shocked to learn of the discovery of two bodies on the outskirts of Badajoz, near the Spanish-Portuguese border, almost certainly those of General Humberto Delgado and his secretary Senhora Campos.

The only people who could have murdered General Delgado—and this seems obviously a case of murder—were his worst enemies, the Portuguese and Spanish Fascists. This looks like a typical Fascist crime, done with typical Fascist methods.

The Portuguese secret police, PIDE, has repeatedly resorted in the past to the assassination of Salazar’s political enemies. Dr. Ferreira Soares, Alfredo Diniz, Francisco Marques, Jose Moreira, Militao Ribeiro, Joaquim Lemos de Oliveira, Manuel da Silva Junior and Jose Dias Coelho, are just a few of the people who have suffered this fate.

Dr. Ferreira Soares was shot down in his consulting room, Alfredo Diniz was shot down in a road ambush near Lisbon, Jose Dias Coelho was shot down in a Lisbon street. Names of the PIDE agents who committed some of these murders are well-known, but they were never prosecuted.

It is also a typical Portuguese Fascist manoeuvre to try to attribute these political murders to opponents of the regime. We were only surprised that some of the international press, including British papers, naively repeated this long-discredited type of slander, a proved weapon of Salazar to try and divide his opponents.

The Spanish authorities have always had close co-operation with the Salazar police in matters of repression.

During the Spanish civil war Spanish refugees in Portugal were handed back to Franco. Manuel Guedes, who is now a prisoner in Peniche, was arrested by the Franco police and sent to Portugal. The same thing happened more recently to another Portuguese prisoner, Germano Pedro.

Delgado’s murder is just one more of a long series by which the Portuguese and Spanish Fascists have maintained their sinister record of oppression and crime in Europe.

[Reprinted from the *Portuguese and Colonial Bulletin*, April-May].

ARCHBISHOP FORECASTS SCHISM IN FRENCH CHURCH

IN January, the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Felton, appealed for unity among French Catholics and a healing of the divisions caused by the Algerian war and its aftermath. His appeal seems to have had little effect. And now the Co-adjutor Archbishop of Rouen, Monsignor Pallier, has referred to a possible schism in the Roman Catholic Church in France at the end of 1965 when the Vatican Council is expected to ratify the schemas on religious liberty and the place of the Church in the modern world (*The Guardian*, 14/5/65). Monsignor Pallier told a regional congress of Independent Catholic Action Workers that the hierarchy was receiving almost daily a flow of letters expressing “a refusal of obedience and fidelity to the Church, and which by their tone could be the preparation for a schism”. This might only affect a small number of right-wing Catholics, but they would “harden in their state of malaise”.

The hierarchy, on the other hand, has recently condemned an independent Catholic weekly for publishing an article by a Marxist (even though it was answered in the same issue by a Dominican) and has forced most of the progressive officials of the Catholic university students’ organisation to resign.

How I Became a Humanist

By PHYLLIS GRAHAM

(Continued from page 166)

But I must come to the end of my twenty years in the "Concentration Camp" of Holy Mother Church! Not unnaturally my health suffered a good deal, and at the end of the twelfth year I had actually been allowed six months' leave under vows. I lived quietly at home and was nursed by my mother, who implored me not to return to the convent. It was 1938—the year of Munich . . . If I had only known then what was about to happen! If I had only realised what actually was happening at that very time . . . and the dastardly and unforgivable part the Papacy was playing in the tragedy of Europe and the world . . . But how could I have had any inkling of what even now, at this present day, is hushed up and known only to a few? In any case, even if the truth had been presented to me, my mind would have totally rejected it. Like the rest of the great herd of obedient and conditioned children of the Church, I knew only what the Church chose that I should know, and nothing more. And was proud, with the characteristic Catholic arrogance, that it should be so.

And so I said goodbye to my long-suffering parents and returned to my servitude. Another eight years dragged on. We survived the war. I became absorbed in designing, lettering and illuminating and miniature painting, work which served to earn us a living, and this, I think, kept me going during that last stretch. But again my health was deteriorating—I was able to keep less and less of the rule—and finally it became clear to me that I was in the wrong place and could go on no longer. I was granted release from my vows, and emerged into the post-war world in November 1946.

I had now to reverse the process of twenty years ago and learn to live once more in a strange world. To me it seemed at first very like a mad world! But sheer necessity hurried on the process, and I soon learned to overcome my nausea caused by the horrible and all-pervading odour of petrol, and to breathe in the fumes as cheerfully and unconsciously as everybody else. It took me longer to conquer my terror of crossing a busy street . . . And it took quite a time to shake off the web of conventional ways and customs that still clung to me . . . for instance, I very often posted a letter without sealing it, or was just saved from doing so by a helpful friend. Because of course we never sealed our letters in the convent; they all had to go to the Superior to be censored.

It was a strange sensation to be free . . . to be under obedience to no one, to go out for long walks, to say and think what I liked, without having to confess it as a "culpe" in the Chapter of Faults before all the assembled community! Of course, I was still a child of the Church, and had no intention at that time of being anything else, so my freedom was really only relative. Although I can honestly say I have never had the faintest desire to return to the convent, I did feel—for some time—the old urgent desire to *belong*, to be protected, to be loved in a special way by God. This need, and the fact that I was soon surrounded by new and old Catholic friends anxious to help me readjust myself, probably kept me in the Church for the next seven years.

It was not until 1953 that I made the final break. I had been teaching in a convent school, and had come to the conclusion that I could no longer give religious instruction

or attend the services with sincerity . . . and incidentally that I simply couldn't stick the convent atmosphere any more! I remember well the queer feeling of deliberately missing a Mass of Obligation for the first time. The fear of Hell lingers, in spite of the reassurances of reason and intelligence!

Strange to say, the final blow to my faith in Roman Catholicism was dealt—all unconsciously, and how horrified he would be if he knew!—by the chaplain of the convent school. In the course of a conversation with him I mentioned cremation, and said that I thought the Pope would be forced to allow it in time, owing to the needs of modern life, etcetera; that I desired it for myself, and that I wished I could get a great number of Catholics to sign a petition to be sent to the Pope. The good priest, who was a convert and broad-minded, smiled at me tolerantly, and didn't attempt to rebuke me for my heretical ideas. "Well, a Round Robin to the Holy Father would be quite a notion," he said, "but I doubt if it would ever reach him. Such things have to go through the Curia, you know . . . the cardinals have the business of sorting out and censoring . . . and so . . ." He gave a shrug and left me to imagine the rest.

And at that moment I had a sort of swift intellectual vision . . . of the Roman Church as a political institution. I understood something of her true nature, and turned from it with astonishment and horror, and afterwards loathing. But I saw only dimly what I see so clearly today. Whether the priest was right about the Cardinals I don't know—I should imagine the Pope, "the last autocrat of civilisation", the only possessor of absolute power over the minds and souls of five hundred million beings, would know just what he wanted to know, and cardinals be hanged. Most certainly that was the case with Pius XII, still ingloriously reigning at the time of this conversation. Knowing what I now know, I am glad that I made my final exit from the Church of Rome in the last years of his disastrous pontificate.

No other form of Christianity appealed to me, in spite of various efforts on the part of Nonconformist friends to hail me as a brand plucked from the burning and hook me into their form of salvation. Sick with a hangover from the glut of religion I felt nothing but disgust with the hollow hypocrisy of it all, and the sight of these violently opposed groups of god-worshippers waving their little packets of "whiter-than-white" truth in my face—purely out of charity for my straying soul, of course—set the final seal on my repudiation of Christianity in any form. At that time an emotional rejection, it developed later into an intellectual realisation of the complete illogicality of the whole Christian set-up; but this of course was a gradual process. The word "evolution" had only the vaguest meaning . . . it was only years later that I was startled to see the whole substance of Christianity collapse before my eyes as the truth about man burst upon me. A "fallen creature"? Needing a "saviour" to redeem him? But surely he is the opposite—a risen creature! Risen from the ranks of the shrew, the monkey and the ape . . . risen by the power of natural selection and by his own painful, undaunted effort in the face of frightful obstacles! All hail, man! Look no more for salvation from any self-styled

(Concluded on page 172)

This Believing World

OH DEAR, another divinely beautiful BBC programme has gone west: none other than *Lift up Your Hearts*—for which the late William Kent compiled an antidote, *Lift up Your Heads*, a splendid anthology for Freethinkers. But to return to *Lift up Your Hearts*: why has it been withdrawn? When first produced it assumed, said Kenneth Lamb, “that most of its listeners would be at least nominally Christians. In 1965, this cannot be assumed” (*Daily Mail*, 1/5/65). For Mr. Lamb, Head of BBC Religious Broadcasting, this is a confession of complete failure. Why did not the broadcasts—the most utterly boring of all broadcasts—lift up our hearts?

★

EVEN though the painter Annigoni (whose portrait of the Queen earned him fame) was born in Italy and was thoroughly indoctrinated with Roman Catholicism, he has outgrown it. He still believes in God, but is not a church-goer and, he told the *Sunday Express* (9/5/65), “Honestly, I can live without priests”. He thinks too, that “today pop is a sort of religion in itself”—and some people might say you can’t sink lower than that!

★

A correspondent to the *News of the World* (2/5/65) received two guineas for a letter on ghosts. It seems that in general they appear because they seek help, and “you may be the one appointed to help them”. In fact, we are told, “they are working out their salvation through good deeds”. But what we don’t understand is how salvation can be attained without the professed acknowledgment that Jesus (son of the Holy Ghost) is their saviour. However, the correspondent assures us that ghosts are “intensely interesting, and he should know for he has “seen and talked to many”. We think he is to be congratulated on so easily winning his prize money.

★

Two vice-captains of opposing test sides—Australia and the West Indies—were “on the same team” on Sunday, March 28th, we learn from the *Trinidad Daily Mirror* (29/3/65). Brian Booth and Conrad Hunte were not playing cricket this time, but were preaching from the pulpit of Tranquillity Methodist Church in Port-of-Spain. And Mr. Booth—who has often said that every time he goes in to bat God goes with him—told the congregation what kind of life they should lead, using two balloons to demonstrate what he meant.

★

A BALLOON was not a balloon, Mr. Booth said, until it was filled with air. And he called on his listeners to lead a “full life like this inflated balloon”. Man, he added, “must be filled from the inside with the spirit of God, who is with me always at cricket, work and with my family. He comes first in my life”. Apparently, even before the family! However, it was no doubt a lively innings, and both Booth and Hunte autographed Bibles afterwards.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

New Victoria Hotel, Corporation Street, Birmingham
Reception in the New Victoria Hotel on
Saturday, June 5th at 7 p.m.

THE CONFERENCE (for Members only)

will be held on Sunday, June 6th in two sessions:
10 a.m.—12.30 p.m. and 2 p.m.—4.30 p.m.

HOW I BECAME A HUMANIST

(Concluded from page 171)

saviour . . . your unique greatness is assured, if only you will live and work by its power within you!

But the hydra-headed monster is still very much in possession of our torn and troubled world. My Catholic friends hammered at me, anxious to save me from the Hell that would inevitably be my punishment were I to die “outside the Church” (threat of menace and horror to the faithful soul!). The only way to deal with them was to cut myself off from them altogether and this I did. Thus enduring the third guillotine stroke of fate that has cut away great portions of my life as if they had never been. There have been two more since then.

In spite of this, I seem to have been haunted all along the line by other Catholics gate-crashing into my solitude and insisting on trying to save me. The sole result of which has been to sicken me more and more with the iniquity of a system that derives its power over human beings from fear. Fear of God’s wrath—of the Church’s condemnation—of the eternal flames of Hell. Is it possible that man, with all his progress, culture, civilisation, astounding abilities and ever-increasing knowledge and power—is it possible that he can still be motivated, cowed into submission, by such primitive witchcraft? The tragic answer is Yes, and this I think is a more devastating fact than even the greatest discoveries of science.

When I look honestly into myself, I cannot deny that a vestige of this horrible fear is still deep within me. My reason, my intelligence, my knowledge of the truth about man and the universe as revealed to me by the sciences all dismiss it as a relic of barbarism, a left-over from the garbage-heap of horrors in the vast unconscious of the human race. But my emotions, not concerned with truth, are still involved and perhaps they will be in some measure to the end.

This is far from being my main reason for actively “becoming a Humanist”. But it may have something to do with it. One needs to get out continually from that evil darkness in the mind, to meet and converse with intelligent beings whose thoughts are not blackened and distorted by that horrible shadow of eternal despair. And I don’t think one need be ashamed of seeking courage from the sense of solidarity with a group of thinkers who, like oneself, are prepared to reject anything that is less than truth.

My actual growth into Humanist ways of thought began just over two years ago, when I came to live at Worthing, after a particularly gruelling stretch of experience. I needed to rest, relax, forget. So I joined the library and read and read, wonderful books that taught me the truth about man and the universe. It was an astonishing revelation of my own ignorance, but the enlightenment brought with it a strange exultation, and a happiness quite different from anything religion ever gave. And far more satisfying!

And so I think my main reason for joining the Humanist movement is the expression of an ardent desire that all men should know freedom from fear and happiness based on truth.

This may seem at present an unattainable dream. One feels so helpless, so insignificant, against the vast mass of ignorance, apathy and superstition. But life itself is built up from the infinitesimal and the Humanist atoms are surely coming together, beginning to create life anew.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS, (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, May 30th, 6.45 p.m.: R. J. KENNING, "The Crucifixion".

South Place Ethical Society, (Conway Hall, Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, May 30th, 11 a.m.: Professor HYMAN LEVY, "The Mythology of Sin".

Notes and News

POPE Paul has given the Jesuits the unenviable task of resisting atheism. But the *Catholic Herald* (14/5/65) was a little worried about the Pope's use of military metaphors in making the assignment. It was "in a sense, natural, as the Jesuits are outstanding by the Church's army, the soldiers of Christ who are fighting the good fight for the triumph of Christ's Church". But there was a danger that the ordinary Catholic might misunderstand the use of military terminology. "He may be tempted to see in it an invitation to attack the atheist along with his atheism, and to countenance the use of political, social and even military weapons against him on that account". And, the *Herald* remarked, "it is never very difficult to start a holy war". Moreover, the lesson of the post-war period has been that "the defeat of atheism will not be brought about by oppression, discrimination or injustice". If conversion is the aim "persuasion through dialogue and by example must be the means".

★

In fact, the *Herald* continued, the whole concept of "fighting" in the name of Christianity required re-examination. "Today we need the synthetical approach". And the Archbishop of Toronto was quoted approvingly: "The Christian today feels a deep solidarity with all of humanity. He engages himself in healing the wounds of men and building up the human community in this world. He seeks to resist the forces of division and hatred in himself and in society". Sweet-sounding words—but we should be foolish to accept them uncritically. This, in fact, is just one of the faces that the Church of Rome shows to the world. Far from resisting "the forces of division", it will still insist upon its own schools—state-supported if possible—and struggle for control in the trades unions, as well as cen-

soring books, plays and films, where it can. There, indeed, is the clue to the Church's *apparent* change of heart. It will fight, all right, where it can and when it pays to do so.

★

MALCOLM Muggeridge was at his most perverse in an article, "Backward Christian Soldiers", in the *New Statesman* (14/5/65), in which he deplored modernistic trends in the Churches. Pessimism, he argued, "is Christianity's great strength, and the reason for its survival. The concept of this world as a wilderness, and of human life as short and brutish, fits the circumstances of most people most of the time". But it is surely the optimistic side of Christianity—that relating to the other side of the grave—that has been the stronger force in its survival. It is curious incidentally that the materialist Hobbes should be paraphrased here by Mr. Muggeridge. And the final words of the article were especially extravagant. If the Roman Catholic Church is crumbling, said Mr. Muggeridge, "A light will have gone out which has illumined all our lives, shone through the art and literature of a long civilisation, and served to hold at bay, if only fitfully and inadequately, the wild appetites to gorge and dominate which afflict all our hearts".

★

THE Catholic editor of the *New Statesman*, Paul Johnson, agreed with Mr. Muggeridge that "the Roman Catholic Church is now firmly launched on the road to oblivion". Moreover, Mr. Johnson welcomed the prospect of the deterioration of his Church. "I have had many dealings with clergymen", he said, "and have formed a poor opinion of their judgment, particularly on important matters of religion. If there is another life, it is a fact of such radical importance that our attitudes to it ought to be shaped by our own individual consciences, without benefit of clergy". Which seems to indicate a serious deterioration of Mr. Johnson's own Catholicism.

★

THE week June 21st-27th will be Anti-Apartheid Week, arranged by the Anti-Apartheid Movement (89 Charlotte Street, London, W.1), and on June 26th, South African Freedom Day, a party will be held at the New Ambassadors Hotel, London, to which Commonwealth Prime Ministers and High Commissioners will be invited. The week will be opened at the Central Hall by a dramatic presentation of the South African people's fight against apartheid. Many well-known actors and actresses will take part. The final event, on the afternoon of June 27th, will be an international rally in Trafalgar Square.

★

In 1957, according to a Gallup Poll, seven out of ten Americans said that religious influence was increasing in the USA; in 1962, 45 per cent still believed it, while 31 per cent said it was on the decline. The latest poll shows a reversal of these figures: 33 per cent say it is increasing, and 45 per cent say it is decreasing. Of the remainder, 13 per cent say there is no difference, and 9 per cent have no opinion. Men tend to be more "pessimistic" than women, people with college educations more so than those without, and people in their twenties more so than older ones. Roman Catholics are, however, more optimistic than Protestants.

★

C. Bradlaugh Bonner, President of the World Union of Freethinkers, tells us of a crippled Freethinker of 65, unable to go up or down stairs, who would like to live with another Freethinker in London. An Irish doctor and a widower with no pension, he finds his present home too dear, and he has to leave by the end of June. Will anyone who can help please write to Dr. E. Morrison, 95 Hendon Lane, London, N.3, or telephone Finchley 8861?

The Age of Unreason

By GEORGE R. GOODMAN

IN a previous article, I shortly alluded to the various astrological ages through which the Earth has already passed and will in all probability, continue to be passing. An age lasts 2,160 years. It will, therefore, be apparent that we only know the last age (Pisces) very well; we know a little about the two preceding ages, Aries and Taurus, and practically nothing about all the others.

The Piscean age ended about 50-60 years ago and the new age, "just started", is that of Aquarius. As we are interested in comparative religion, it behoves us to examine the Piscean age, because it has, unfortunately, dominated the last 2,000 years with rather dire effects.

The ancients had a huge "calendar" which was not printed on paper, but hung "in the sky", because it was formed by the various star-clusters or constellations. This calendar was not only a universal time-reckoner; it embodied also a system of allegorical figures and signs which were used by all nations, who attached to these emblems more or less hidden meanings in accordance with their varied religious ideas. Strange as it may seem, these signs still permeate present-day religious ideologies, although the Churches would not admit that in so many words.

Our entire solar system, Sun and planets, describes a colossal circle around another Sun in space, viz. the star Sirius (Osiris), known to mariners as the Dog-star. The various ancient nations, who inhabited China, India, Babylonia, Asia Minor, Greece and Egypt, possessed already, several millennia prior to the year one, a comparatively high form of civilisation, and were far more advanced in the science of astronomy than the benighted Christians who still burned and tortured their astronomers as late as the 16th century of our era. For instance, Chinese astronomers calculated already in 2500 BC, the advent of eclipses; and Babylonian astronomers calculated the movements of Sun and Moon to an accuracy of ten seconds.

The just mentioned huge movement of our entire solar system takes 25,920 years for one single orbit around Sirius and of course, during that time, our Sun occupies different positions amongst the various star clusters. To the latter, the ancients gave highly descriptive names which are still used, because, when the stars are joined by imaginary lines, they resemble animals or men.

The best known is Ursa Major, the Great Bear, or the Plough with its seven bright stars, two of which are known as "the pointers", since a line joining them will, if produced, pass close to the celestial pole and the star Polaris, in Ursa Minor, known as the Pole Star, important to navigators of sea and air.

The three Magi of Christmas were *not* men, but the three stars in the belt of Orion (the hunter)—which fact deflates with one stroke the biblical account of the three wise men from the East seeking the "Christ-child" at Bethlehem and being guided by a star which stopped over the house. Actually, this story was already several thousand years old—prior to the alleged events in Judaea.

Nobody will deny the fact that Taurus the Bull dominated the early Egyptian and Assyrian epoch, approximately 4570 to 2410 BC. In Assyria it was the winged bull, but the Egyptians had also a sacred live bull, said to be the incarnation of Osiris and born of the "cow-goddess" Hathor in a stable, typing the Egyptian Messiah, Iesu.

This animal, known as Apis, the bull, had to be black all over, with a white triangular spot on the forehead, an eagle on the back and the image of a scarabaeus under its

tongue. The last three symbols were, of course, painted on.

In Mithraism—which ran a neck and neck race with Christianity—the candidates for initiation were baptised in the dripping blood of a slain bull, so that they were "washed in the blood of the bull"; this bull-bath was called Taurobolium.

The backslidings of the Children of Israel into idolising the "Golden Calf" of Baal the Babylonian god, are no more reprehensible than the later adoration of the "Lamb of God" by the Christians.

It merely meant that, in each case, the devotees reverted again to the emblem of the previous cycle, (eon or age); for there is no accounting for tastes when it comes to religious tit-bits, like the one so often quoted: — "the holy Lamb slain from the foundation of the World". One is often constrained to ask, what does such an irrational sentence mean to a pietist? After 2,000 years the Lamb is still venerated!

Into this category belong also such words as: — pastor shepherd of souls, the congregationalist flock, door of the sheepfold and the emblematical shepherd's crook of an archbishop, sported at coronations.

As already mentioned, it took the Roman Church 600-700 years of unceasing propaganda to introduce that revolting figure of a so-called "saviour on a cross", as the people were opposed to such a lugubrious sight.

So far, it had only been a lamb on a cross, in accordance with the age or eon of Aries, the Lamb, a constellation, through which the Sun passed for a period of 2,160 years. In this connotation the word "cross" merely meant the crossing of the zodiacal circle.

The earliest known crucifix with a human figure was the one that Pope Gregory the Great presented to Queen Theodolinde; it can be seen in the Church of St. John at Monza.

By the way, Pope Gregory I was the man who, when he saw some fair-haired British youths in the slave-market at Rome and being told that they were *Angles*, remarked that they should be "angels" and resolved from that day on the conversion of Britain or *Engel-land*.

For that purpose, he sent a body of monks under the apostle St. Austin (Augustine) for the conversion of England to Christianity, and thanks to that enterprising man who, in 579, founded the archbishopric of Canterbury, we are still blessed with an Archbishop of Canterbury!

In later centuries, the Lamb, (as a "hang-over" from the age of Aries), was hung above the figure of a man and this may still be seen in ancient church windows and other odd places. But the age of Pisces, the Fishes, with which we are particularly concerned, because it exerted such a retarding influence on the mental development of the human race for as long as two millenia, had started already approximately in 250 BC, and only ended round about 1910—a mere 55 years ago.

The sign of Pisces shows two fishes loosely held together by a line and swimming in opposite directions. Looking at this sign in an allegorical way, it is absolutely typical of the Christian Churches and their doctrines.

Constantly warring factions opposing each other on doctrinal lines—one going this way and the other that way. The more rapacious and predatory big fishes pushing the little ones aside or gobbling them up. The masses or ordinary people were as mute as the fishes and as dense as the element of water in which they lived. Hardly any

sound of opposition to all those hair-splitting, doctrinal arguments about their jesuitical dogmas and specious saviour tales. Those who were critical or did not believe the phantasms ordained by their hierarchy, were relentlessly persecuted or brutally butchered.

For two hundred years the nefarious tribe of *agents provocateurs* or spies working on behalf of the Inquisition spread terror through southern and western Europe. They made a fat living denouncing those who were supposed to be heretics and if there were none, they manufactured them. They ran no risks, for the fiendishly applied tortures would make their victims confess, no matter how innocent they were!

The spies were paid by the Church which claimed that the Inquisition merely acted as "spiritual health officers" to prevent "contagious errors" from spreading amongst the masses. A dictatorial and intolerant Church allowed no opposition, but handed out lush favours and lucrative advancement to their most fawning sycophants and servile supporters. It was an epoch of ruthless intolerance and a complete blackout of loving kindness and Greek wisdom.

It was the Age of Unreason and blind relief!

(To be continued)

Mr Goodman's Critics

It has been something of an education to read the articles contributed to your journal by G. R. Goodman. Unfortunately the lesson I have learned is one far from favourable to the Secularist movement in so far as its scholarship goes. The leading article in your issue for May 14th, discusses the future of secularism and the writer F. H. A. Micklewright, states that "it is essential that secularism should be in accord with the best contemporary scholarship related to the subjects with which it deals". I would suggest that Mr. Goodman ponders this point before rushing into print.

The fact of there being similar stories to that of the life of Jesus does not establish a connection, Mr. Goodman, though, writes as if they do. He offers absolutely no evidence to show at what point the linkage takes place. The canon of scripture we know as the New Testament was compiled some years after the events related and at various places. It would seem more likely that no gospel was compiled in the land the story is set in. This coupled with the very poor Greek of the earliest MSS raise a major objection to the theory that the compiler/s would have the ability to translate a cuniform document, even allowing that cuniform was still in use and not a dead script at the period in question.

One would have assumed that Mr. Goodman knew of the conflicting religious ideas of the Egyptians, his articles seem to suggest otherwise for he presents his material—and some of his ideas as to what was the translation of this or that might make some scholars smile in view of the disputes over translation (perhaps Mr. Goodman has never studied the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*)—as though the religions of the Egyptians were a unified set-up. It would indeed be a brave man who tried to demonstrate that the huge collection of deities, major and minor, playing a role in the life of Egypt presented a unified and clear cut theology. Indeed we have an example, Mr. Goodman cites Isis and Horus's mother and son in a resurrection drama, true enough except that the resurrected person was Osiris the father of Horus, consequently here is a difference of some importance between the story of Jesus—the Son, in Trinitarian language also the Father, and Horus a distinct, unresurrected son. This one example should suffice to indicate the shallowness of Mr. Goodman's thesis.

Mr. Goodman of course dislikes Christianity because it is associated with an acceptance of the miraculous. It is perhaps rather significant that another writer in THE FREETHINKER of May 14th, concedes that Josephus does refer to Jesus, a minor point agreed, yet one that explodes with the force of an historical nuclear bomb as far as the myth theory goes. To be quite frank, Mr. Goodman advances a complicated theory to account for something which is stripped of its miracles is anything but fantastic. The Christian accepts the miraculous in Christianity because he is satisfied with the secular evidence. If one believes in God one attributes power to him and an ability to act when the need arises. In studying the material available which has a direct bearing on Christian origins the conclusion is inescapable, something took place. Mr. Goodman might well sneer and suggest that only those who think long his own philosophical lines are capable of reasoning, perhaps his egoism knows no bounds for he has all the truth and anyone

else differing from his self-opinionated outlook is consigned to outer darkness. Unfortunately for such a cut and dried approach there are people who using the same resources as himself come to conclusions other than his, perhaps we may not have his peerless intellect, but until he can establish a direct association between the gospel writers and the many distinct faiths he builds up his theory from and establishes that secular writers—and religious—of the period in which Christianity arose knew they were dealing with religious fiction, then it is of no use seeking to "explain" why or how the religion was made for he has not demonstrated a need to advance such a theory. It is a scientific maxim that until the simple explanation is shown to be completely invalid there are no grounds for a further theory.

CHRIS. STROTHER, FAES,
Secretary, St. Osmund Society.

It seems to me that the views regarding Christ have been very strangely misunderstood by many readers of *The Golden Bough*. Sir James Frazer certainly did not deny the historical reality of Christ, and those who hold Christ as being a mythical character have no support at all from Frazer.

It is important for all Freethinkers to realise this, and not to be led astray by men like Mr. George R. Goodman. There have been legends about many important individuals in history, but it does not necessarily follow that these important individuals did not exist.

I quote from *The Golden Bough*: "The historical reality both of Buddha and Christ has sometimes been doubted or denied. It would be just as reasonable to question the historical existence of Alexander the Great and Charlemagne on account of the legends which have gathered around them."

"The great religious movements which have stirred humanity to its depths and altered the beliefs of nations spring ultimately from the conscious and deliberate efforts of extraordinary minds, not from blind unconscious co-operation of the multitude. The attempt to explain history without the influence of great men may flatter the vanity of the vulgar, but will find no favour with the philosophic historian".

And in *The Scapegoat*, Frazer writes: "The doubts which have been cast on the historical reality of Jesus are in my judgment unworthy of serious attention". And again in *The Scapegoat* he writes: "To dissolve the founder of Christianity into a myth as some would do, is hardly less absurd than it would be to do the same for Mohammed, Luther and Calvin. Such dissolving views are for the most part dreams of students who know the great world chiefly through its pale reflection in books".

Sir James Frazer believed that Jesus was a historical reality, and that he was crucified at Jerusalem under the governorship of Pontius Pilate.

Yet we still have Freethinkers denying dogmatically and arrogantly the historical reality of Christ. I, for one, am certainly not impressed by what they say, and therefore they have very little chance of leading me astray.

I say it is possible that Jesus did exist and that a virgin birth and resurrection is only a mere legend. It certainly takes a powerful figure to be the essence of any religion like Christianity, and behind it all I think there was a Jesus of flesh and blood.

R. SMITH.

PORTSMOUTH DISCUSSION GROUP

There must be many people today in a town the size of Portsmouth who have abandoned belief in the traditional sanctions of morality (the fear of Hell and the hope of Heaven) who yet feel the need for a foundation for their moral standards stronger than that of mere habit.

The Portsmouth Humanist Society believes that there is an unsatisfied, indeed unrecognised, demand for a forum where ordinary people can meet and talk about ethical principles, and we are fostering the establishment of a Discussion Group which will cater for this demand.

This Moral Philosophy Discussion Group is being formed as an autonomous body. Membership will not be limited to Humanists but open to anyone, irrespective of nominal religious commitment, who feels sufficiently interested to attend a weekday evening meeting at fortnightly or monthly intervals in Portsmouth to discuss with others the ethical problems of our times. It will, of course, be for the members of the Group to arrange the actual frequency and venue of their meetings.

Anyone who would like further information about the Group should write to the Convener, Mr. M. McKechnie, at 176 Highbury Grove, Cosham, Portsmouth, who will be pleased to provide further information.

We hope, in a few months time, to publish the results of our efforts to establish this Discussion Group for the consideration of Humanists and Freethinkers in other towns.

DONALD E. W. HOWELLS, Chairman.

HUMANIST CONFERENCE

"REVALUATIONS of the Family" is the subject of the third annual conference of the British Humanist Association, to be held from August 27th-30th at the University of Keele, North Staffs. The speakers will be Professor Lester Kirkendall, Head of the Department of Family Living, Oregon State University, on "The Twentieth-Century Context"; Michael Power, a Psychiatric Social Worker, on "The Family: Therapeutic or Pathogenic"; and Brigid Brophy, the novelist, on "The Immorality of Marriage—an Ethical Appraisal". H. L. Elvin, Director of the Institute of Education at the University of London, will be guest of honour at the dinner on August 28th. The conference fee will be £6 15s. for members of Humanist, Rationalist or Secularist organisations, £8 5s. for non-members. Further details may be obtained from the Secretary of the British Humanist Association, 40 Drury Lane, London, W.C.2.

CORRESPONDENCE

ECUMENISM

The Cardinal-Archbishop of Utrecht well known by his progressiveness at the Vatican Council made a speech at Utrecht on Ecumenism to an audience of theological students. One of the attendants having remarked that the liberty of religion in Latin states was a sheer mockery, the prelate answered that, though he would not try to justify all that is happening in these countries, one must not believe everything written in Dutch newspapers. The Protestant "sects" (as he pleased to call them) had "gone out of" (i.e. deserted) the Church. Therefore they became "rancorous" and provoked by their behaviour "a certain resistance". (What kind and from whom, the Cardinal did not reveal). Their Protestant brethren in Holland did not appreciate them, he continued, and no Christian community in good faith could gain honour with these "figures".

A. M. VAN DER GIEZEN, (Middelburg-Holland).

DEMOCRITUS ON DEATH

"Darius, a barbarian and a man of no education, the slave both of pleasure and grief . . ." mourned distractedly for his dead wife. Democritus agree to bring her to life again if Darius 'would inscribe on his wife's tomb the names of three persons who had never mourned for anyone . . . Darius could not find any man who had not had to bear some great sorrow, whereupon Democritus burst out laughing, as was his wont, and said, 'Why then, O most absurd of men, do you mourn without ceasing, as though you were the only man who had ever been involved in so great a grief, you cannot discover a single person . . . who was without his share of personal sorrow?'"

--Emperor Julian's letter (69) to Himerius.

KIT MOUAT.

FRAUDS, FORGERIES AND RELICS

The North London Branch of the National Secular Society has followed up its *Crimes of the Popes* (still available at 6d.) with another couple of chapters from *Crimes of Christianity*, entitled *Frauds, Forgeries and Relics*.

It is a photographed reproduction of Foote and Wheeler's original pamphlets, with a preface by F. A. Ridley, showing that the "lucrative rackets" have not ceased and "relics and impostures" still form a solid basis of Vatican wealth. It fully justifies the quotation on the cover from Edward Gibbon "The Church of Rome defended by violence the Empire she had acquired by fraud".

They are available from THE FREETHINKER Bookshop at 1s., and we are confident that this effort will meet with equal enthusiasm from the thinking public.

EVA EBURY,

(Hon. Sec. North London Branch, National Secular Society).

SPECIAL OFFER to readers of this paper. The Autobiography of Major Christopher Draper, DSC., entitled *The Mad Major*. First published in 1962 at 25/-. A limited number offered at 10/- post paid. 230 pages fully illustrated and autographed from C. Draper, 2 Conway Street, London, W.1.

NEW PAPERBACKS

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Details of membership of the National Secular Society and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, S.E.1.

The Freethinker

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BEFORE the connection between sexual intercourse and childbirth was recognised, there was no conception of paternity, the leading divinity was a mother goddess, and the adults of the tribe undertook joint responsibility for the upbringing of children. Understanding of paternity tended to make the family group smaller, if not monogamous; while the growth of civilisation, technology, economics and population size brought about emphasis on property inheritance and "legitimacy". "Illegitimate" children were—and in most societies still are—penalised for the "sins of the fathers". Sporadic attempts have from time to time been made in the Soviet Union to undermine the monogamous family unit on the grounds that it fosters acquisitiveness, nepotism, racialism and social injustice. While these arguments have never satisfactorily been answered, it has been found in practice that there are overwhelming emotional reasons why people cling to the traditional family pattern. Not only do the great majority of parents who practise contraception—and a large proportion even of those who do not—want to bring up their own children, but the experience of children's homes is not encouraging. While no longer redolent of *Oliver Twist*, *Brave New World* or 1984, and in most cases performing a valuable social service for those unattached infants, usually coloured, who find it difficult to secure adopters, children's homes tend to produce "institutional" infants. Somehow the atmosphere of staff going "on" and "off" duty and the confusion of changing faces seem to disturb or inhibit the developing child mind. Such infants can often be recognised by emotional and intellectual retardation and a tendency to melancholy or apathy. Professional assessment agrees with lay intuition that children are likely to feel more secure if brought up in individual loving households.

Present Difficulties

Paid foster parents can be and are widely used and perform a useful service, but there is always a danger that this arrangement may become purely a commercial proposition. There are, however, many couples who desperately want children but for medical reasons are unable to have their own, who are waiting to undertake the expense and emotional commitment of supporting adoptees and give them full legal status. But they do not always find it easy to become adopters.

There are many reasons for disappointment. Applicants may be too old, or too poor, or too ill, or too neurotic for social workers to undertake responsibility for entrusting children to their care. But there are large numbers of prospective parents admirable by criteria of age, income, health and character, who are unable to obtain babies because they do not profess a religious belief.

This anomaly is one of many inherited from the days when virtually the entire population professed—and probably in most cases really believed in—Christianity. It is difficult to say what the proportion is today, but only about ten per cent of the population attends even Easter

communion. Yet the great agnostic or apathetic majority are still expected to profess a religion and often obtain endorsement from a clergyman who doesn't know them—to the intense irritation of all concerned—before adoption can be considered.

Many factors have led to the present difficulties. Most of the older adoption societies are denominational. This is a relic of the days when the Churches, notably the Established Church of England, opposed the formation of a secular welfare state and insisted that whatever inadequate social services there were remain exclusively in their own hands. In this way social sanctions could reinforce the law in the maintenance of religious

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Agnostic Adoption

By DAVID TRIBE

belief. Understandably enough, these denominational adoption societies still want to or legally have to find adopters of their own persuasion.

There are however ostensibly "undenominational" adoption societies which do not mind what sect an applicant belongs to so long as it is religious. The National Adoption Society, a charity registered as a benevolent society "under the Friendly Societies' Act", is officially established to help children "to be adopted by suitable and respectable persons of established positions in life". Yet in practice it does "insist that applicants should profess some religion and we ask for a reference from their priest, vicar, or pastor . . . We do not accept atheists or agnostics". There can be no question about whether many agnostic and atheist couples are "of established position in life". It must be assumed that they are not deemed "suitable and respectable". Presumably this view derives from the traditional assumption that religion is the only basis for morals and that an irreligious person is *ipso facto* immoral.

This conclusion is in flat opposition to that drawn from criminal statistics, but it is at least logical. The Society has however said, "Although we have nothing against agnostics, we are unable to help them". Similarly, the National Children Adoption Association "does not undertake the responsibility of placing children with those who are atheists . . . We do wish to know that people belong to a specific faith (we are undenominational) and practise their religion . . . at least to a reasonable degree . . . Because of the rules of this Association, we will be unable to help the applicant adopters who describe themselves as Humanists. We feel sure that they would be people who would live good lives and have nothing personal against them, but as we have told you, we do not place our children where there is no religion in the home". In this context religion is little more than a social cachet, but a very important one for prospective adopters who are too honest to affect a religion which they don't believe in.

Some local authorities have set up adoption societies, that are also in theory undenominational, and supported by all the ratepayers in the area. Yet many of them are no more helpful to Agnostics or Atheists than sectarian societies. Sometimes this policy results from ecclesiastical politics on the council, sometimes from the attitude of the

children's officers concerned. Appointment within the social services is still very much under church influence and the number of acknowledged Agnostics or Atheists is infinitesimal. Thus piety or hypocrisy perpetuates itself.

There is another difficulty. Even where an adoption society is sympathetic it cannot provide babies which do not exist. Under the 1958 Adoption Act "The consent of any person to the making of an adoption order in pursuance of any application (not being the consent of the infant) may be given (either unconditionally or subject to conditions with respect to the religious persuasion in which the infant is proposed to be brought up) without knowing the identity of the applicant for the order". This is identical with a clause in the 1950 Adoption Act, save for the curious replacement of "religious persuasion in which the infant is proposed to be brought up" for "religious persuasion in which the infant is to be brought up". Standards of honesty seem to have declined in the short space of eight years.

Except in special circumstances, before a baby can be adopted the consent of its parents or guardian—often the natural mother—is required by the court, i.e. the local juvenile court (two-thirds of all cases), the county court or the High Court. This consent form reads: 1. I understand that the effect of an adoption order will be to deprive me permanently of my rights as a parent/guardian and to transfer them to the applicant(s) . . . 4. I hereby consent to the making of an adoption order/a provisional order in pursuance of the application (on condition that the religious persuasion in which the infant is proposed to be brought up is . . .).

If the parent is an unmarried mother she may have spent the past few months in a mother and baby home which, for reasons outlined above in connection with adoption societies, is often a religious foundation. She is thus under strong real or moral pressure to enter on the form the denomination of the home. Or a welfare worker of the local authority persuades her to give her baby a religion. Or the court or outside a JP asks "What is your religious persuasion?" in a tone which suggests a positive answer, if it be only an ancestral memory. An unmarried mother is likely to have guilt feelings and do everything possible to placate authority and not appear to be "depriving" her child of religion or lacking in contrition. Where there is no parent or guardian to give consent courts habitually write "C of E". Once the baby has been given a religious label there is a legal obligation to find adopting parents of the same persuasion.

There are two important practical results. For religious and social reasons, Roman Catholic families tend to be large and a disproportionate number of unmarried mothers Catholic. There is thus a greater supply of "Catholic" babies than adopters available, with the necessary credal qualification. At the same time there are twelve times as many applicants as babies to hand in the non-Catholic population.

The long range national solution is to amend the 1958 Adoption Act and greatly expand local authority adoption societies with purely secular terms of reference. It is an extraordinary anomaly in the present system that natural parents or guardians must permanently renounce their "rights as a parent/guardian and not even know the identity of the adopters and yet be able to dictate the credal upbringing of their children. Practical criteria and consideration of moral worth should be the only determinants of suitability as adopters, while all babies should be given every chance of being adopted. They should not acquire the inhibiting label of "Catholic", while coloured infants, who are found to be generally more accept-

able to non-religious than to religious applicants, should not be deprived of a home whose potential parents are ideological "unsuitable".

For the indefinite future, however, Agnostic or Atheist prospective adopters (and unmarried mothers) are not without help. An Agnostic Adoption Bureau was set up in September 1963. In February 1965 it was recognised as an adoption society by the London County Council and as a charity by the Charity Commissioners. Its aims are adoption and helping unmarried mothers to find accommodation during pregnancy. Applicants will be judged on social and ethical merit and will not be subject to credal tests, though naturally preference will be given to Agnostics and Atheists as they are generally denied other facilities. Though it is certainly more accurate to describe a baby as "agnostic" or "atheist" than religious, the society regards the labelling of babies at all as faintly ludicrous and hopes that parents, whether religious or non-religious, will not try to impose their beliefs on their children. As it is a charity it is unable to work for changes in the present law, but hopes that these will speedily come.

THOMAS PAINE

WAY back in 1809—on June 8th—Thomas Paine died in New York. Here is a small garland of quotations from his writings as a tribute to a man, whose brain was accurately attuned to the times he lived in, yet whose works still carry a powerful message in the modern world.

Government is not a trade which any man, or any body of men, has a right to set up and exercise for his own emolument, but is altogether a trust in right of those by whom the trust is delegated, and by whom it is always resumable. It has of itself no rights; they are altogether duties.—*Rights of Man*.

War involves in its progress such a strain of unforeseen and un-supposed circumstances, such as a combination of foreign matters, that no human wisdom can calculate the end. It has but one thing certain, and that is increase in taxes.—*Prospects on the Rubicon*.

Science, the partisan of no country, but the beneficent patroness of all, has liberally opened a temple where all may meet. Her influence on the mind, like the sun on the chilled earth, has long been preparing it for higher cultivation, and further improvement. The Philosopher of one country, sees not an enemy in the Philosopher of another: He takes his seat in the temple of Science, and asks not who sits beside him. *Letter to the Abbé Raynal on the Affairs of North America*.

Whenever we read obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we call it the word of a demon than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness, that has served to corrupt and brutalise mankind; and, for my own part, I sincerely detest it, as I detest everything that is cruel.—*The Age of Reason*.

I love the man that can smile in trouble—that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. It is the business of little minds to shrink; but he, whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death.—*American Crisis*.

CHRISTOPHER BRUNEL

F. A. HORNIBROOK MEMORIAL APPEAL

Fred Hornibrook who died on March 31st, aged 88 was an active worker for Freethought all his life. He was regarded with deep affection and admiration by those who knew him, and he possessed those qualities that the unthinking often claim to be the monopoly of "true Christians".

Certainly he had all the qualities of those true men and women who have dedicated themselves down the ages to causes sometimes unpopular, but always honourable. And at all times he had the unstinting support and encouragement of his wife Nina.

We feel that his many friends will welcome the opportunity of contributing to an appeal for Mrs. Hornibrook which we are privileged to sponsor. Cheques, postal orders etc. should be made payable to the "F. A. Hornibrook Memorial Appeal Committee", and sent to the Hon. Treasurer at 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. All donations will be acknowledged.

William Collins, Richard Condon, Peter Cotes, William Griffiths, William McIlroy and David Tribe.

“Killing no Murder”

By F. A. RIDLEY

A FEW weeks ago in an article, “The Ethics of Assassination”, I cited the famous pamphlet written in 1657 to advocate the assassination of the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell. It would appear from subsequent correspondence that this classical advocacy of tyrannicide is nowadays almost forgotten. However, the political and religious murders of President Kennedy and Malcolm X have made this grim subject again topical. *Killing no Murder* remains the classical discussion of this dubious and intriguing theme, and it may not be out of place to again bring this most remarkable pamphlet to the notice of contemporary readers. For, apart from its author’s highly controversial conclusions, Edward Sexby’s thesis is without doubt a most remarkable one; a masterpiece of ironic eloquence and logical analysis. Despite its ruthless conclusions, it is one of the great political pamphlets in the English language.

Its author, steeped in the Puritan tradition of biblical eloquence, was an authentic master of English prose in what was perhaps its classical epoch. For like his great Puritan contemporaries, Milton and Bunyan, Sexby’s style reveals strong traces of the stately eloquence of the Authorised Version (1604) of the Bible, a monument of eloquent English prose if scarcely of scientific accuracy. I would rank *Killing no Murder* as in the top flight of 17th-century English prose, and its ex-Ironside author as not only one of the most acute critics of dictatorship in political literature but as the literary equal in prose, even of his fellow puritans Milton and Bunyan. As a modern radical publicist recently reminded us, the Cromwellian army nurtured the seeds of English democracy.

From internal evidence, *Killing no Murder*, was written in February 1657, soon after the failure of the conspiracy of Colonel Miles Sindercomb to kill the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, as he passed down Whitehall; an earlier attempt to kill Cromwell as he drove through the streets of London in 1653 to assume the Protectorship had also narrowly failed, when a huge stone crashed through the glass roof of his carriage. Both Sindercomb and the author of *Killing no Murder* were members of the Levellers, an egalitarian group in Cromwell’s Ironsides, who would now be described as the extreme left of the English Revolution in the mid-17th century. As usually perhaps in the later stages of successful revolutionary movements, the radical wing became disappointed at the slow pace and incomplete results of the revolution for which they had fought. Like Milton, they evidently held that “a new presbyter is but old priest writ large”.

The Levellers had, in particular, expected a much greater degree of political and economic democracy than Cromwell’s regime was prepared to grant. In particular, the republican elements in the army were incensed at what they believed was the Protector’s intention to restore the monarchy in his own person and dynasty.

Cromwell twice refused the crown, but his radical critics believed that these were only feelers and that “King Oliver” would eventually succeed King Charles. Soon after the trial and execution of the Sindercomb conspirators, another officer in the army, Colonel Edward Sexby published *Killing no Murder*, a passionate defence of Sindercomb and an outspoken demand for the assassination of Cromwell. The pamphlet was printed in Holland (then the most liberal regime in Europe) under the pseudonym of William Allen. But its real author came

over clandestinely from Holland and distributed copies all over the country.

On June 24th, he was arrested by Cromwell’s ubiquitous secret police when on the point of embarking for Holland. He died violently in the Tower of London on January 13th, 1658 either as a result of committing suicide (as stated by the government) or (much more likely) assassinated by his jailers; “shot whilst trying to escape” would be the modern expression. Prior to the publication of his famous diatribe against Cromwell, Sexby had had a chequered career as successively a colonel in Cromwell’s army, a diplomatic agent of the Commonwealth regime, and finally as an anti-Cromwellian agitator.

Shortly before the publication of his pamphlet, he had been trying to form an incongruous alliance against Cromwell of his republican critics on the Left (as we now term it) and of his royalist enemies on the then political Right. In connection with which, Sexby had had an audience with the exiled Charles Stuart then resident in Holland, but had expressly stipulated that he “was not to bend the knee” to the future Charles II. Meanwhile the sensation made by *Killing no Murder*, was terrific. One of its most interested readers was Cromwell himself and Sexby had the (posthumous) satisfaction of assisting to do with his pen what he had advocated doing with the dagger.

For Cromwell was so haunted by the fear of assassination that he resorted to the most extraordinary precautions, changing his guards every day and his bedroom every night: Finally he “died of the fear of dying”, (as a contemporary royalist pamphleteer remarked significantly) on September 3rd, 1658, his “lucky day”, the precise anniversary of his decisive victories at Dunbar and Worcester—surely a bizarre illustration of the biblical adage that the pen is mightier than the sword, or the dagger!

Colonel Sexby’s arguments for tyrannicide are not only eloquent and logical, but are extremely learned, replete with classical and theological lore. And some of them seem to be derived from earlier Jesuit manuals on regicide. As I have shown elsewhere, Sexby’s intermediary during his negotiations with Charles Stuart was a famous Jesuit, William Talbot SJ, later Archbishop of Dublin. Extremes meet: Jesuits and red publications combined against their common enemy, Cromwell. Cf my book: *The Revolutionary Tradition in England*, p. 131.

Unfortunately, in an article of this summary nature it is quite impossible to do even the barest justice to this great pamphlet, which begins with an ironic reminder to Cromwell that, however great his services to mankind may have been in his life they were nothing to the benefits that Cromwell would bequeath to his contemporaries by abruptly quitting this mortal scene. “For when the Father of his country is dead, all of us will be his heirs”.

Sexby goes on to outline the characteristics, not only of Cromwell and of the eight major-generals who then ruled Great Britain under the Protectorate, but which permanently reappear under every police state. Indeed—and again quite apart from its special subject matter—Sexby’s pamphlet must surely be regarded as one of the most powerful and permanent analyses ever penned of the endemic characteristics of every dictatorship. Much of it is still as relevant in connection with modern police states as it was, no doubt, to the military dictatorship of Cromwell and his major-generals. Its author passes with

(Concluded on page 180)

This Believing World

SO THE Goya portrait of the Dukes of Wellington has been recovered by the police without any "psychic" intervention by the "world-famous" Dutch clairvoyant Gerard Croiset, who completely failed to find it when he was here in England a few weeks ago. His failure was however not quite as bad as the utter failure of our own mediums, who had a much longer time to contact the spirits.

★

THEIR astonishing success has always been in getting in touch with somebody's Uncle George or Aunt Martha, still alive in Summerland after being dead and buried in this vale of tears years ago. These spirits have never the slightest difficulty in pointing out where the old flower pots still stand, or where a long lost will can be found in a disused bureau. Six poor girls were murdered this year, and not a single clue has been offered the police about the murderer by any medium. What a farce is "mediumship".

★

YOU can't keep true Christians out of the news. Here we have the Exclusive Plymouth Brethren back—in court this time, trying their utmost to stop a wife whose husband left her the better to worship Jesus, from interfering with their divine service. The wife actually had the temerity to call the Brethren "a lot of brain-washed idiots", for which, instead of turning the other cheek, they wanted her to be put in prison. Alas an unbelieving judge refused (*Daily Express*, 22/5/65) to grant such an order. We can't help wondering—what would Jesus himself have done if faced with such a case?

★

ALTHOUGH the Oberammergau Passion Play in Bavaria will not take place until 1970, it is already beginning to be talked about. The *Sunday Express* recently had five columns about it, though there was nothing said about it being as anti-Semitic as *Mein Kampf* itself. Whether Otto Preisinger will take the part of Jesus again is not certain, but of course he talked a lot about "our Lord" in the article. Indeed, Preisinger found out that "Christ was a very strong man". The strongest man that ever lived? We expected something of the sort.

★

WE DO not hear much these days of the Congregational Union, but we note that its new chairman, the Rev. E. Gould, wants a Christian warden in every street "to help and advise those in need". He wants even more—a "tremendous upheaval" (*Daily Express* 18/5/65) in his Church, to provide "spearheads of evangelism". In his own church, records were made of discussions between Christians and non-Christians and these were played back. But alas it appears that the Christian case was unsatisfactory "because people were not sure enough of their facts or shy of getting involved in an argument . . .". Which is a way of saying that the Christian case made a very poor show. It is a pity that Mr. Gould himself does not try his hand with a well-informed Freethinker. Is he shy?

TEENAGE SEX

Notwithstanding all the influence to which young people of today are exposed—greater independence; the weakening of family bonds and religious influences; the development and exploitation of the teenage commercial market; earlier maturity and the powerful sex drive at this age—nowwithstanding all this, the results of this research show that premarital sexual relations are a long way from being universal amongst teenagers, for well over three-quarters of the boys and girls in our sample have never engaged in them.

—Michael Schofield (*The Sunday Times*, 23/5/65)

Well, well! Surprise, surprise!

"KILLING NO MURDER"

(Concluded from page 179)

consummate literary skill from learned logic to passionate denunciation, and concludes with a tremendous burst of eloquence clearly modelled on the biblical prose of the Apocalypse.

"There's a great Roll behind, even of those that are in his own muster, rolls that are ambitious of the name of the Deliverers of their country and they know what the action is that will purchase it. His [Cromwell's] bed his table is not secure, and he stands in need of other guards to defend him against his own. Death and destruction pursue him wheresoever he goes; they follow him everywhere like his fellow-travellers, and at last they will come upon him like armed men. Darkness is hid in his secret places, a fire not blown shall consume him; it shall go ill with him that is left in his Tabernacle. He shall flee from the Iron weapon and a Bar of Steel shall smite him through. Because he hath oppressed and forsaken the poor, because he hath violently taken away a House that he builded not; we may be confident, and so may he, that ere long all this will be accomplished. For the triumphing of the wicked is but short and the joy of the Hypocrite but for a moment. Though His Excellency mount up to the Heavens, and his Head reacheth unto the clouds, yet he shall perish like his own dung. They that have seen him shall say Where is he?"

After this burst of burning rhetoric with which Sexby concludes his pamphlet, it is somewhat of an anticlimax that whilst Cromwell died in the same year as Sexby (1658), yet his demise was not followed by the millenium, but by the Restoration, a vastly more corrupt and incompetent regime than was that of Oliver Cromwell.

There are perhaps lasting lessons in "The Ethics of Assassination" to be learned from this historical anticlimax.

FOUR POEMS

THE OLD CARDINAL

His servants,
Fee, Fi, Fum and Fo,
are dead long long and long ago.
The woman who kept house for him
became a bride in black.
He lives alone
and lives because
his Hell's too full
for him to die.

THE SEMINARY AND BRIGHT WINTER

In the maze of midsummer
they spread a safety net,
fit for a bishop,
and bodies go
straight into the cupboard.
But then in wintertime the masters are
too cold to watch with care
just how the students grow!

THE HOLY GHOST

Mandarin angels
borrow books
ex libris Eucharist.
They do their nuts
at mention of
a quiver of
wood warblers.

TOADS FOR SUPPER

The handsome devil spent
one night in heaven.
"They weren't,"
he smirked, "all angels!"

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD. (Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

Notes and News

ECUMENISM pursues its leisured—and mainly one-sided way. The Bishop of Bath and Wells, the Right Rev. Edward Henderson will, we learn from the *Guardian* (24/5/65), take part in the annual Roman Catholic pilgrimage to Glastonbury on July 4th. He will thus become the first Anglican bishop to take part officially in a Roman Catholic pilgrimage. At Glastonbury Abbey, mass will be celebrated for the first time since the dissolution, and Archbishop Cardinale will crown a statue of Our Lady of Glastonbury.

★

THE twenty-eighth successor to St. Ignatius as Father-General of the Society of Jesus, Father Pedro Arrupe, is considered to be a man of the centre, George Armstrong reported from Rome (*The Guardian*, 24/5/65). He is certainly a man of experience. A 57-year-old Basque, Father Arrupe returns to Europe after having been a missionary in Japan since just before the last war. He was on the outskirts of Hiroshima when the first A-bomb was dropped, and his early training as a medical student proved useful in setting up field hospitals. He also believes in action. He would like to see the Jesuits entering into the working world—perhaps taking up where the worker priests were forced by Pius XII to leave off. His predecessor, Father Janssens, hoped that at least 30 per cent of the Jesuits would become engaged in actual mission work, but at present the figure is only 19 per cent. Having served in Mexico and the USA as well as Japan, Father Arrupe is missionary minded and may succeed in increasing the percentage.

★

ON MAY 23rd, Father Agnellus Andrew, the BBC's interpreter of Roman Catholic ceremonies—the papist Richard Dumbleby—launched an appeal for £500,000 to extend

and modernise the Catholic Centre for Television, Radio and Cinema at Hatch End, Middlesex. Religious programmes would be recorded at the Centre for use in the newly-emerging countries of Africa, Asia and South America, and students would be trained in the efficient use of broadcasting techniques. "A vast erosion of the Christian faith is going on all over the world", Father Andrew said. And he regretted that "We have still not succeeded in harnessing Christianity to the power of the broadcasting medium". But he can hardly attribute the failure to lack of practice.

★

LAST year the Church Commissioners' investments earned £18 million, nearly half the total income of the Church of England. "A Church which is really committed to serving humanity should give this money away", said Nicolas Stacey, Rector of Woolwich, writing in the *Observer* (23/5/65). Increasingly thoughtful Christians found themselves believing more and more in less and less—"more deeply committed to Christ, more ready to be reverently agnostic about much else". And so, Mr. Stacey prayed and pleaded for a "resurrected Church" which would not express its life in mighty buildings and other expressions of "worldly power and status". Its work would be done "without fuss or publicity through small groups of people meeting in their own homes and places of work . . . planning how they can best serve the community through the secular, statutory and voluntary organisations". This, believe it or not, is the way in which Mr. Stacey thinks the Church could survive.

★

IT MUST however be said in Mr. Stacey's favour that he sets an example. Though now Rural Dean of Greenwich as well as Rector of Woolwich, he is no longer paid by the Church, but earns his living outside.

★

ROBERT BROWNING, as Christopher Ricks mentioned in his *New Statesman* review (21/5/65) of *Browning to his American Friends* (Bowes and Bowes, 50s.), never forgave the Spiritualists who "gulled" his Elizabeth. And the best letters in the collection, Mr. Ricks said, "are those where he meets his old spiritualist enemies again". Notably, of course, "Mr. Sludge the Medium", alias Daniel Dunglas Home. Another, Sophie Eckley, "cheated Ba [Elizabeth] from the beginning" but Browning admitted "in the bitterness of truth", that his wife deserved it "for shutting her eyes and stopping her ears as she determinedly did".

★

FOR once all the bishops—or at least the four who voted—were on the right side in the House of Lords on the motion for the second reading of Lord Arran's bill on homosexual law reform, which was passed by 94 votes to 49. Former Conservative Lord Chancellors, Lord Dilhorne and Lord Kilmuir bitterly attacked the bill; former Lord Chief Justice Goddard spoke of "bugger's clubs" being "given a charter"; and Lord Montgomery made a comparison with "the devil and all his works". The present Lord Chancellor, Lord Gardiner and most of the Labour peers seem to have supported Lord Arran, but the Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Home Office specifically dissociated the Government from the bill. Mr. Wilson's might be a great reforming Government, but it has its limits. And when Mr. Leo Abse sought leave to introduce a homosexual law reform bill in the House of Commons, 51 Labour members voted against it, along with 126 Conservatives and one Liberal. The minority in favour comprised 114 Labour members, 40 Conservatives and seven Liberals.

The Age of Unreason

By GEORGE R. GOODMAN

(Continued from page 175)

AS previously mentioned, our entire solar system with all its planets and moons describes a huge circle around another sun in space, viz., the star Sirius. This movement takes 25,920 years to complete and, during that time, our Sun appears to traverse through various constellations or star-clusters. This was already known to the ancients from China to Mexico and from Babylon to Egypt.

They called that belt or apparent pathway the large zodiac, because there is also the small zodiac of 12 months to which reference will be made later on.

By arbitrarily dividing that huge circle into 12 sections (or houses), they gave to each of them an appropriate sign and name and called the duration of 2,160 years an "age". Twelve of these ages constitute one complete turn of our solar system around Sirius.

As all the religious festivals in the world were—and still are—based on the movement of sun, moon and planets and the resulting four seasons, it is sheer imbecility on the part of the various denominations to assert that either the birth or the death of their central figure, or any "miraculous" happening in their particular orthodoxy had anything to do with the seasonal festival.

But for a long time it was something of a mystery why practically all the Sungods and most of the Christs and Messiahs should have been portrayed as having had two mothers. The answer can be found in the small zodiac. For if one draws a straight line from the zodiac's section called Virgo, going through the pivotal centre to the opposite section called Pisces, one has traversed six months, which will presently be seen to dramatise not only cosmic happenings, but also man's evolutionary development.

The ancients localised the birth of the natural man in the zodiacal house of Virgo, and that of the evolved man in the opposite house of Pisces. These, then were the houses of the two mothers of life's progeny. The first was the Virgo mother, the primeval symbol of the Virgin Mary—thousands of years before the year One. Virgo gave man his natural birth by water (all babies are born in a sac of water!) and became known as the "Water-mother". Pisces stood as the symbol of the evolved and intellectual man and was called the "Fish-mother".

Describing man, Plato wrote: "through body, it is an animal, through intellect, it is a god". No wonder then that Virgo was poetised as the Water-mother of the natural man, and Pisces as the intellectual and ethically-evolved man or the god-to-be. Man's physical body is the high product of a biological evolution that actually started in the ocean water! The Virgin mothers are all identified with water as symbol and their various names, such as Meri, Mary, Myra, Myrrha, Miriam, Venus (born of the sea-foam, stirred between the knees of Jupiter, as he waded through the seas), Tiamat and Thallath (Thalassa Greek for sea) are all designations for water or the sea.

On the other hand, there are the fish avatars of Vishnu (the second god of the Hindu triad), such as the Babylonian Ioannes who, like the Egyptian Horus and the Gospel Jesus, and the Hebrew Jonah (derived from Ioannes)—all came as the zodiacal Pisces or Ichthys, "fish" in Greek, and offered themselves as "food for man", while the latter is immersed in the sea of generation.

Dagon, the national god of the Philistines, represented as half-man and half-fish, was to his worshippers the symbol of the fertilising power of nature. And the Assyrian goddesses Atergatis and Semiramis (who is none other

than the Astarte of the Old Testament and equates with the Greek Aphrodite and the Roman Venus, were actually called "fish-mothers"!

To put it concisely in one sentence:—all the various Christs and saviours were credited with two mothers, because Virgo was the water-mother of the natural man, and Pisces was the fish-mother of the spiritually evolved or highly ethical and intellectual man.

May we put in a not out of the way aside, viz., that most humanists, agnostics and atheists have, because they spurn ecclesiastical dogmas, adopted in their stead highly ethical standards or maxims which, to them, are spiritually guiding lines of a far higher and more advanced type than the reason-insulting doctrines of a group of bigoted, stupid and superstitious creed manufacturers of the 3rd and 4th century!

The greatest honour and respect should be accorded to the Dane Hans Christian Anderson and, likewise, to the two German brothers Grimm because, unlike the writers of the New Testament, none of them had the impudence to call their fairy-tale books "holy" or "sacred".

Maybe, a hundred years hence, we shall have an "International Board of Writers and Historians" to determine whether any book deserves the predicate or subtitle "holy" or "sacred". And also, whether any historical person, like the Emperor Constantine I., of Nicean disrepute, deserved the subtitle "the Great"—or, whether the full subtitle should really have been "the Great Scoundrel".

It is impossible to assess the psychological effect and damage on children and teenagers caused by the horrible story of the beheading of the disciple John. But even to an adult, the picture of John's head being presented to an alleged "King" Herod on a platter (on account of a "promise" given to a strip-tease dancer) is one of the most repulsive and macabre representations in the Bible's extensive calendar of wicked atrocities—real or imaginary.

Alas, when one investigates this particular yarn of pious frightfulness, one comes to the astonishing discovery that the Tetrarch Herod of Galilee had died already in the year 4 BC and could not possibly have enjoyed the dancing of the damsel 35 or 36 years later on!

But the greatest dénouement awaits the investigator who makes use of the Julian calendar and the Roman Catholic calendar of "Saints" in connection with the large zodiac. He will find that the "death" of John the Baptist is fixed on August 29th. On that day, a specially bright star, representing the head of the constellation Aquarius, rises, whilst the rest of his body is below the horizon, at exactly the same time as the sun sets in Leo (the kingly sign representing Herod). Thus the latter "beheads" John, because John is associated with Aquarius, and the *horizon cuts off the head of Aquarius!*

And that was that.

(To be continued)

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

New Victoria Hotel, Corporation Street, Birmingham

Reception in the New Victoria Hotel on

Saturday, June 5th at 7 p.m.

THE CONFERENCE
(for Members only)

will be held on Sunday, June 6th in two sessions:
10 a.m.—12.30 p.m. and 2 p.m.—4.30 p.m.

A Distinguished Humanist

By D. M. CHAPMAN

I DON'T mind finding fault with God but not with Gilbert Murray—not that Gilbert Murray is beyond criticism mind you; it's just that his *Humanist Essays*, recently reissued in Unwin Books, (7s. 6d.) lend themselves more to high praise. Some idea of what is to be enjoyed in this collection will be presented but, first of all, a word or two about the author would be in order for those who are unacquainted with him.

Gilbert Murray, who was destined to become Britain's foremost Greek scholar, was born in Australia in 1866 but moved to England while still a youth. Even as a child he was shocked by the cruelty of certain stories in the Bible, while in the school yard he had many a fight in defence of tortured animals. As he matured, intellectual arguments against religion developed, but his intellect was always integrated with his sensitive nature. This welding of high sensitivity and intellect was to be seen in his other endeavours of which his work in Greek drama was the most famous. His brilliance was early rewarded at the age of twenty-three with a Professorship of Greek at Glasgow. Later he returned to Oxford, where during the remainder of his ninety-one years he continued his studies and worked for peace as a staunch supporter of the League of Nations and the United Nations. Why the ashes of this freethinker now rest in Westminster Abbey is an interesting question I cannot answer.

The essays are divided into literary and philosophical ones. Almost all are of World War I vintage as certain allusions to the times show, but in no way are they rendered quaint or irrelevant with the passage of time. His prophesy that a second world war would bring about the end of civilisation was wrong, but lest we feel superior in our hindsight let us be sobered by the realisation that today it is almost a question of *life* surviving another world war. The main allusions however in these essays come from classical Greece and it's from this rich source that Gilbert Murray was able to draw some uncanny parallels with his day. Often though, especially in the essays dealing with Greek drama, the subject matter is treated for its own sake in such a way that interest is developed even for readers having no familiarity with Euripides and Aristophanes. Only seldom does a Greek or Latin phrase pass untranslated, for usually Murray is able to impart the meaning without the reader being aware of the translating, unlike some of the heavy-handed efforts one often encounters.

The problem of translation is chiefly this: a reader who has spent his youth suffering to master Greek and Latin does not want to be cheated by having the thrill of a personal translation snatched from him by the author; and what is worse, why give it to those who have not suffered? Gilbert Murray's art was to please both parties. His translations were by no means those of the pedant for instead of using the word "overwhelmed" in one instance, he boldly translated the Greek equivalent as "niagaraed".

Now, anybody can tell you who won the Battle of Cucumber Junction—and its date—but ever so rarely someone like Gilbert Murray comes along who can blend the historical facts in with the subtle moods and attitudes of the time and make them live for us. This feeling for a period in history comes with long study of all aspects of the civilisation and with a poet's intuition in reading between the lines without getting carried away or forcing present day attitudes into the past.

This last point implies that some attitudes of the ancients should seem strange or inexplicable to us but of all the ancient civilisations, that of the Greeks would seem most akin to ours, especially in many of the ways we approach and think about a problem. Our recent strongly experimental approach to problems is an exception but, nevertheless, since we can trace much of the best of our philosophical and scientific outlook to the Greeks, it is not surprising that we feel this kinship. Murray's essays are an eloquent argument in favour of this view as he shows just how great our debt is to this race. Had we evolved into a mystically orientated civilisation, then India, the "very gonad of theology" (as H. L. Mencken put it) might have seemed more spiritually at one with us, and the Greek phenomenon, on the other hand, a mere aberration of history.

Murray was his own devil's advocate concerning the usefulness of Greek studies. "Granted . . . that the ancient poets and philosophers were all that you say, surely the valuable parts of their thought have been absorbed long since in the common fund of humanity . . . Why go back and labour over their actual words?" His answers, by the way, are required reading for schoolmasters engaged in teaching Latin and Greek.

Plato's vivid imagery of the shadows in the cave and how these imperfect projections of reality constitute the world of those untutored in philosophy, is well known. Murray too, in the same tradition, expressed the life led by the ignorant in the following fashion:

Think of life as a vast picture gallery, or museum; or better, perhaps, as a vast engineering workshop. It is all those things, among others. Then think of oneself walking through it. You know the average man walks through a museum or a workshop when he knows nothing particular about it. You try hard to be intelligent; failing in that you try to conceal your lack of intelligence. You would like to be interested, but you do not know what is interesting and what is not. Some of the specimens strike you as pretty; some of the engines seem to you very powerful; you are dazzled and amused by the blaze of the fires, you are secretly interested in the men and wish you could talk to them. But in the main you come out at the other end tired and rather dispirited and having got remarkably little out of it. That is the way a stupid and uneducated man, with no one to help him, goes through life.

Next, in the same vein, he tells of the difference it makes to be guided by someone competent. Most of us at some time have felt this way, but it needs the artist to take the commonplace and make us aware of it afresh, as well as to point out details which escaped us.

Professor Murray also took no little interest in anthropology and comparative religion. His ideas on man as a social animal are worth noting. Man does not need gods and priests to tell him what is good in all matters because as a social animal there are instincts eliciting actions of self-sacrifice for the good of the species.

The whole supposition that a system of violent and intense rewards and punishments is necessary to induce human beings to perform acts for the good of others is based on a false psychology which starts from the individual isolated man instead of man the social animal. Man is an integral member of his group. Among his natural instincts there are those which aim at group-preservation as well as self-preservation . . . Even among the animals, a cow, a tigress, a hen pheasant, does not need a promise of future rewards to induce her to risk her life to save her young from harm . . . Why did St. Francis love his fellow-men, his birds, his enemies? He no doubt explained that it was all a part of his love of God. True, but his love of God was really his humanity . . . which

made him love his group, and take into his group all life that met him, especially those parts that needed love most, the helpless, the despised, the angry and hostile.

Just as great minds drift into senility and beautiful women become crones, so too the light the Greeks kindled in the Mediterranean world dimmed and was replaced by a weary despair for the world and a way out through some sort of saviour religion. This state of affairs is treated in his "Pagan Religion and Philosophy at the Time of Christ". The interesting paradox of gods losing rank but gaining in vitality is discussed. J. M. Robertson also developed this idea when he speculated on the existence of a Joshua-Jesus saviour cult of great antiquity that had always smouldered among the less sophisticated in spite of their official monotheism.

I feel that Murray lapsed when he decided to define religion in such a way that it had no similarity with any dictionary meaning. It would have been easy for him to coin a new word for the feeling of awe one has for the immensity of the universe, this being his notion of a religious attitude. "To be cock-sure is to be without religion. The essence of religion is the consciousness of a vast unknown". This, I suppose, makes him a religious atheist.

CORRESPONDENCE

SECULARISM TODAY

As a new boy to the ranks of your paper—well, new subscriber, let us say as I am 63½ years of age—may I be given a little of your letter page to comment on secularism today. I agree wholeheartedly with your correspondent, Michael R. Evans, who comments on the slight rift between Atheists and Agnostics, and am inclined to put it more strongly—and have done so in propounding the agnostic idea for years. A man is as much a fool to proclaim there is *no* God, as to say there *is*—we do not *know*, either way. Not a particularly scholarly way of expressing a fundamental truth, maybe, but pretty near the mark!

While I agree that dissertations on secularism should be scholarly, so giving dignity and poise to the subject, I do think we should be able to speak and write to meet the minds of the not-so-educated (like me, for instance) and there is a tendency, I find to cling too tightly to the past. There seems to me a danger of near-canonising Charles Bradlaugh, a little too much mention of the days of slavery—wars and bloodshed lying at the door of organised religion in *past centuries* and statements to the effect that the advent of Christianity was a tragedy that overcame mankind, etc. All this, you and your readers may think, sounds like secular-heresy, but how can I, or we, answer the really sincere Christian, when he or she mentions the undeniably good work that has been done in *comparatively recent years* by people—ordinary people, as well as the Schweitzers, the Catholic priest caring for the child-thieves and ragamuffins in the streets of Naples, and the various societies who operate under the inspiration of Christian belief? It seems a lame answer, to say, these people *could* have benefited humanity *without* having the stimulus of Christian belief—in fact, from their own inner goodness. Perhaps some of your younger in age, but older in secular reasoning and argument, readers, may be able to help me with suggestions on these points.

Now, Mr. Editor, my own particular "anti", is directed against the Lord's Day Observance Society, who's moronic activities and pharasaical edicts are probably not unknown to your readers. What is *not* generally known and realised, is that this Society is still very, very strong, both in supporters and finance, and still a force to be reckoned with, and to be fought against tooth and nail, because there are a surprising number of adherents to this ghastly society, among Members of Parliament, which is now engaged in examining the old, and not-so-old laws, which these religious dictators invoke to gain their own ends. My son and I have organised a petition-campaign to get as many names as possible to put before Parliament the proposition that these outdated laws, many of which are ridiculous in the extreme, but nevertheless, enforceable, removed completely from the Statute Book, or at the very least, drastically modified. We call ourselves—at the moment, nearly two thousand of us—the Sunday Freedom League, and we would like to hear from readers to add their names to our petition, and automatically enrol them into our League, which we are running entirely at our expense, and wish to keep it so.

I have appeared on TV recently—TWW (West of England and

Wales)—and was able to "bring down in flames" the West of England's Representative of the Lord's Day Observance Society.

JOHN SHEPHERD,

Lyndon Vale, Paulton, Near Bristol, Somerset.

DOGMATIC?

If asked my religion, I reply "Atheist". To say "Agnostic" would mean that I have not "got rid of all my gods, in any shape or form": they may be half out of the door, but they have not yet shaken the dust from their feet. To call oneself an Agnostic in this 20th century, inevitably implies that Christian claims may well be true, so that, far from "attacking", the position of Agnosticism hardly seems worth defending.

To ask for proof "against" something, is to create a contradiction in terms, as positive evidence cannot be used in negative argument. However, though this may seem like casuistry, let me put forward evidence for the non-existence of a god. As there has never been a finite being which could comprehend the infinite, so, if an infinite being existed, it would not only not comprehend the finite, but not be aware of it; for infinity is timeless, and how long is a millenium in its span? Similarly, how long can infinity itself be? Infinity must consist only of finite periods one after the other. If we find no gods in the finite, then there can be none in the succession of the periods that go to make up the infinite. A timeless and stateless infinity is by definition, non-existent, and if postulated, can only be inhabited by mythical beings.

Michael R. Evans almost puts his finger on the Atheist's real problem, which is—How can any man state categorically anything at all? Rockets to the moon—could the scientists be deceiving us? We might indeed all be dreaming (or having nightmares!) at this moment. Life, however, involves commitment, essential if we are to put our convictions into practice. As there is no evidence for the existence of fairies at the bottom of my garden, I must reject all claims that there are, in spite of the fact that no one can prove they are not there. Dogmatic, us Atheists?—not so; for we will readily change our appellation to Agnostic, if and when someone puts forward evidence to show the existence of an unknown god.

ERIC S. BARKER.

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The Freethinker

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IT MATTERS little, for all practical purposes, whether a man chooses to call himself an Agnostic or an Atheist. To some extent, then, the recent discussion in our correspondence columns over the relative merits of the terms may be considered unimportant. Yet such arguments have been going on at least since T. H. Huxley coined "agnostic", and basically for very much longer. A former editor of this paper, Chapman Cohen, devoted a good deal of time to the subject, and his complementary pamphlets (*Agnosticism or and Atheism*) may be recommended to new readers. Last week, however, an Agnostic critic, John Shepherd, mentioned the name of Charles Bradlaugh, and warned us all against excessive adulation of that great Victorian, whom we seemed in danger of "near-canonising".

Now, in my opinion, Bradlaugh, far from being over-raised, has never received anything like his due deserts—either in his lifetime or since. It was Freethinkers who recognised his greatness while he lived, and it is Freethinkers who perpetuate his name today. Some day, I believe, he will be acknowledged by the world at large as the giant that he was. But I can assure Mr. Shepherd that Bradlaugh is in no danger of canonisation—at least in these columns. Our appreciation is soundly based on his merit, and stops this side idolatry. It is appropriate, in the circumstances, to recall his *Plea for Atheism*.

No Conception of God

Bradlaugh wrote his 20-page essay in the hope of removing some of the prejudices against Atheists and those—like Voltaire and Paine—who have been wrongly accused of atheism. And I am sure that for many he succeeded (the pamphlet reached its 20th thousand in 1880) but it is little read today. It is plain, for instance, that Mr. Shepherd has never read it. Otherwise he would not equate the Atheist with a fool who proclaims there is no God.

The Atheist, Bradlaugh insisted, does not say "There is no God"; he says, "I do not know what you mean by God; I am without idea of God; the word 'God' is to me a sound conveying no clear or distinct affirmation. I do not deny God, because I cannot deny that of which I have no conception, and the conception of which, by its affirmer, is so imperfect that he is unable to define it to me". And I defy our Agnostic critics to detect anything dogmatic in that.

Bradlaugh was a Monist. There was, he affirmed, only one existence of which—in Spinozan language—every phenomenon was a "mode" or modification. And if God were defined to mean "an existence other than the existence of which I am a mode", Bradlaugh was prepared to deny God as impossible. "When the Theist affirms that his God is an existence other than, and separate from, the so-called material universe, and when he invests this separate, hypothetical existence with the several attributes of personality, omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, eternity, infinity, immortality, and perfect goodness, then the Atheist in reply says—I deny the existence of such a being."

The conception of creation was also impossible. We are, Bradlaugh said, "utterly unable to construe it in thought as possible that the complement of existence has been either increased or diminished, much less can we conceive an absolute origination of substance". Here again we, note the influence of Spinoza, but we might also see it as a philosophical anticipation of Hoyle and Bondi's "steady state" cosmology. (The alternative—and somewhat misleading—

appellation, "continuous creation" should not, as Hoyle has emphasised, be taken to indicate creation out of nothing).

As Bradlaugh said: "We cannot conceive either, on the one hand, nothing becoming something, or on the other, something becoming

nothing". If we destroy a gold coin, we are only destroying its "condition", not its substance. Creation and destruction "denote change of phenomena, they do not denote origin or cessation of substance".

Dilemma of Theism

Bradlaugh proceeded with this masterly statement of the dilemma of theism:

"The Theist who speaks of God creating the universe, must either suppose that Deity evolved it out of himself, or that he produced it from nothing. But the Theist cannot regard the universe as evolution of Deity, because this would identify Universe and Deity, and be Pantheism rather than Theism. There would be no distinction of substance—no creation. Nor can the Theist regard the universe as created out of nothing, because Deity is, according to him, necessarily eternal and infinite. God's existence being eternal and infinite, precludes the possibility of the conception of vacuum to be filled by the universe if created. No one can even think of any point in extent or duration and say: Here is the point of separation between the creator and the created. It is not possible for the Theist to imagine a beginning to the universe. It is not possible to conceive either an absolute commencement, or an absolute termination of existence; that is, it is impossible to conceive beginning, before which you have a period when the universe has yet to be; or to conceive an end, after which the universe, having been, no longer exists . . . The Theist who argues for creation must assert a point of time—that is, of duration, when the created did not yet exist. At this point of time either something existed or nothing; but something must have existed, for out of nothing nothing can come. Something must have existed, because the point fixed upon is that of the duration of something. This something must have been either finite or infinite; if finite it could not have been God, and if the something were infinite, then creation was impossible to add to infinite existence".

Dismissing God

Bradlaugh's refutation of theism is, in my view, overwhelming. The word "God" defines nothing, demonstrates nothing, explains nothing. The Atheist is surely right, then, in consciously dismissing God from his reckoning.

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Bradlaugh on Atheism

By COLIN MCCALL

The Age of Unreason

By GEORGE R. GOODMAN

(Concluded from page 182)

In the Gospel drama, John the Baptist enacts the role of the first-born or natural man, coming first to prepare the ground for the advent of the highly evolved, spiritual man. Therefore, he would stand in the allegory as the son of the Water Mother, Virgo, and, under the astrological symbolism, would be born at the autumn equinox. On the opposite side of the half-circle would stand the Avatar, Jesus, son of the Fish Mother, born in his mother's house of the Fishes, Pisces. These houses are six months apart on the zodiacal chart!

We can discount the Luke fable that John "leaped in his mother's womb" when Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth and found her at the six months' stage of her pregnancy. It is but a simple matter of arithmetic to note that the last three months of Elizabeth's pregnancy with John coincided with the first three of Mary's pregnancy with Jesus, bringing the birth of Jesus just six months after that of John!

But the most significant fact is that the early Christians actually celebrated the birth of their "Lord and Saviour" on March 25th, and only transferred it to December 25th in the year 345 AD, by decree of Pope Julian II. In other words, the Spring equinox (6 months after John's birthday) would have been the correct birthdate of Jesus—if he had ever lived! But it was already in the chart of the zodiac some thousands of years, before it could have happened in Judaea.

The implication is overmastering that the alleged historical occurrence is but a presumption of ignorance, based on the zodiac when the latter became circulated as history among the unintelligent masses. People who were children in intellect took the grand parables and allegories of ancient "science" as veritable history. It was symptomatic of the age of unreason.

It has been said that every time a man opens his Bible, he closes his mind to reason. That those people who are delicately described as "practising Christians" do not criticise the fantasies in their holy book will become apparent when the following two accounts are subjected to reason and logic. Let us consider Jesus's alleged entry into Jerusalem and we shall immediately realise that when myth is turned into "history", it becomes ludicrous in the extreme.

According to Matthew, Jesus sat astride *two* asses, viz., mother and foal; even a circus-born would have the greatest difficulty to emulate such a feat! But Mark and Luke make him sit on the young foal "on which no man had ever sat", implying that an ordinary donkey was not good enough for such an exalted person. Alas,—the asinine writers of this crude canard never considered that the young foal would break down under the weight of a robust saviour!

But, say the gospel writers, it was all done "so that it should be fulfilled where it was written". When one looks up where it was "written", viz., the Egyptian papyri; one finds that the ass was the symbol of the Egyptian god Atum and that such an ass-headed god can be seen on the tomb of Rameses VI. The god was always depicted as creating and procreating in the two characters of Father and Son, Osiris and Horus: Horus the babe and Horus the man. Hence the allegory of the ass and the foal!

In a later period, the god was called Atum-Iu, and, pictured with the ears of an ass, and Iu is both ass and god.

That Iusa was by the Romans turned into Iesus, has already been mentioned.

Coming now to the entry into Jerusalem—how could Jesus have found the populace, whose hostility was so great that it ended in his alleged "death" within a week to welcome him with hosannas and strewn palms? And how could he have got the crowd out for such a reception without the help of publicity? All that is a little more than one can swallow!

Before the Joshua invasion, Canaan was a dependence of Egypt and, according to tablets found at Tel-el-Amarna, a city of the Jebusites was called Urusalim. Later or David made it his capital and called it Jeru-salem (salen or sholom meaning "peace"). The ancient Egyptians believed that, after death, they would go to a "City of heavenly peace" and called that place Aarru-Hetep which was the prototype of the Greek Elysian fields. (Aarru meaning "fields" and hetep, "peace".)

We can find this symbolism amongst all the ancient nations. The Paradise of ancient Persia, the Garden of Allah or Allu (Aarru), the happy Isles and the Indians' happy hunting grounds, then Valhalla, the heaven for the Nordic brave—not forgetting Augustine's "City of God" and Bunyan's "Celestial City". We even have a poetical "Jerusalem" in England's green and pleasant land! And delightful Elysian Fields—Champs Elysées—in Paris.

Thus, from first being a city of the imagination "in the heavens", it became a city on the map! Many nations of antiquity used their capital city as the earthly counterpart of the allegorical heavenly city. But the not-so-bright scenario writers of the New Testament, who copied the entire story from ancient Egyptian papyri messed the whole thing up and, instead of putting the "reception" of the alleged saviour in the "holy heavenly city" *after* his death, put it before. Not possessing enough acumen, they mixed up the locations and thus turned a delightful fable into impossible history!

The Egyptians always pictured the god as riding into the "kingdom of glory" on the back of the ass (a low animal), thereby portraying his conquest over his low animal self. That's why we are blessed with a Palm Sunday and a fabulous triumphal entry into Jerusalem of a smiling saviour sitting astride two donkeys!

Hewn out of the stonework outside Catholic churches one can sometimes see four curious figures which, according to the district or the local tradition, are variously described as representing the "four evangelists" or the four living creatures mentioned in the Apocalypse and Ezekiel.

Actually, they are merely the four points of the compass and have been adopted from the zodiac in which they are known as the "four fixer signs" and are three months apart. They are Leo the lion, Taurus the bull, Aquarius the water bearer, and Scorpio, also known as the eagle. According to tradition, the lion represents Shem, the Lion of Judah and the semitic race. The bull symbolises Egypt and the land of Ham. Aquarius is said to represent the mythical Noah and the remnants of the Atlanteans, the Adam race, driven by a catastrophical flood to the four quarters of the globe. And Scorpio or the eagle, belongs to Japheth who is alleged to have travelled north, thus becoming "father of the Aryan race".

Whilst all this is mere mysticism, a few indisputable facts remain.

(Concluded on page 188)

Civil Liberties

By DAVID TRIBE

OPENING the 1965 Annual General Meeting of the National Council for Civil Liberties, the Chairman, Mr. Malcolm Purdie, declared that reports about young people in Brighton this Easter had made it necessary to point out that they were not sub-human and had a perfect right to wear long hair and sleep on the beach if they so wished. Taking this a stage further, the General Secretary, Mr. Martin Ennals deplored the number of cases of youths remanded in custody on trivial charges for which, even if proved, the punishment should not be imprisonment. Another matter which disturbed him was the failure to provide satisfactory compensation for those wrongfully convicted and imprisoned. The Council's most sensational recent activities had been in connection with the Challenor cases, where, after some two years' delay, an official report was still awaited. Investigations of the Ombudsman proposals were still under way, and the Council was continuing its representations in favour of a more democratic jury service and more effective race relations bill.

Discussions of motions was integrated with approval of the annual report (published as a very useful booklet, *Civil Liberty*, 1965, 1s. 6d. plus postage from NCCL, 4 Camden High Street, London, N.W.1). Firstly, the Council was instructed to follow up its work in convening the first all-party (Irish and English) conference to discuss political and religious discrimination in Northern Ireland, by calling for a Royal Commission or independent inquiry.

The report mentions certain anomalies relating to young people. They may fight in national wars at 18 but not vote for or against them; bet in a betting shop but not send in football pools coupons; be made bankrupt, but not bring legal proceedings, take out a mortgage, enter into hire purchase agreements or make a will. The AGM considered the age of majority should be 18.

The National Secular Society gladly accepted amendment of its motion on Sunday observance, which originally referred to implementation of Crathorne as a second-best interim measure. Almost unanimously it was agreed that "in order that all citizens may be able to indulge in business or pleasure at all times not debarred by employment agreements, this Annual General Meeting urges HM Government as soon as possible to repeal the absolute Sunday Observance Acts".

More awareness than hitherto was shown of the educational problem of colour prejudice, which depressingly crosses all political and class boundaries. Concern was also expressed at the arbitrary way in which immigration officers determine right of entry, and an appeals machinery was called for. The AGM sought amendments of the Race Relations Bill to include discrimination of employment, colour-bar advertising, an investigating Tribunal, freehold and leasehold property, Northern Ireland and discrimination and incitement based on religion.

There was universal welcome of the proposed appointment of Law Commissioners, but a wish to see the inclusion of suitably qualified laymen. It was urged that "after the lapse of a suitable period of time previous convictions should be deleted from the record", and that bail should be granted more freely, especially to juveniles. The desire of judges to award damages, instead of a jury, was censured. And a resolution instructed the Executive to "investigate the position of the International Court set up by the Council of Europe".

A Progressive League resolution, passed with an overwhelming majority, stated: "This Annual General Meeting deplores the use of state-supported schools for religious indoctrination and wishes to support revision of public policy on religious education in schools particularly with regard to the removal of the compulsory Act of Worship and religious instruction on a purely Christian basis".

The Executive Committee was instructed to seek reform of the system of electoral registration, which is at present disenfranchising substantial numbers of people, and liberalisation of postal and proxy voting procedures. For example, wives do not enjoy the latter privilege—yet another example of discrimination against women, which is the subject of a new NCCL booklet. (Other titles are *Customs Procedures* and *Local Government*). The EC was also instructed to press for full implementation of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which has nowhere been applied *in toto*.

Motions remitted to the EC at its request, on the stated grounds that the matters involved needed further study or that the present wording was inadequate, concerned the use of tape recordings as evidence in criminal proceedings, the recruitment to the Police Force of "ethnic personnel in places predominantly inhabited by such ethnic groups", and Religion and the Law. This motion, submitted by the National Secular Society, stated: "This Annual General Meeting urges HM Government to remedy the following violations of individual and group freedoms entailed by the Establishment of the Church of England, viz: (i) inability of the Church of England to change its formularies and forms of service without approval by an external body, viz., Parliament, which may be neither sympathetic nor interested; (ii) appointment of higher Church dignitaries by the Queen acting on the advice of the Prime Minister, who may be of any or no religion and acting according to political considerations; (iii) statutory position of Church courts which are outside the normal appeal court mechanism and state legal aid, and do not enjoy the confidence of the public; (iv) use by the Church of past community charitable and educational endowments and redeemer tithes, which were never voluntarily given to it; (v) presence in one of the Houses of legislature, viz., the Lords, of non-elected members with overt ideological commitment; by disestablishing and disendowing the Church of England".

One of the factors contributing to the liveliness of debate and great press interest was the presence as seconder of Dr. Bryn Thomas, formerly vicar of the Ascension, Balham Hill, and defendant in the notorious Southwark Consistory Court case of 1961, widely condemned as unjust in journalistic, legal, and even ecclesiastical circles. An EC attempt to amend the motion was defeated, but its proposal to remit was then passed.

The NCCL bulletin for May has this paragraph: "At the AGM considerable discussion was provoked on what the Council's policy should be on this controversial issue. The Executive Committee will be examining the question, and will welcome the views of members, both as regards any examples which could be given where the civil liberties of the subject are infringed by the establishment of the Church of England, and as regards comments on the relationship generally between the two. The Council has many members and affiliated organisations who are linked with the Church in one way or another, and it is for this

(Concluded on page 188)

This Believing World

DURING the Hitlerite regime of bestial murder and torture, the reigning Pope Pius XII had very little to say. After all the Vatican had a concordat with Germany and Hitler had been born and brought up a Catholic. There was always hope that he would return to the fold when he had conquered Europe. We wonder if these thoughts were in Cardinal Heenan's mind when he called Hitler the "father of Continental ecumenism" (*Daily Mail*, 5/5/65). "Certainly", added the Cardinal, "no man has been more responsible for throwing Protestants and Catholics into each other's arms".

★

IN FACT, continued Cardinal Heenan, if England had suffered enemy occupation, the ecumenical movement, which was "making fair progress", would by now be "very much further advanced". And what would a mere "enemy occupation" be compared with the coming together of Catholics and Protestants—with Catholics on top, of course!

★

HOWEVER, a leap forward towards unity between the Christian Church of England and the Christian Methodist Church looks as if it might take place. Whether the idea delights Rome is another matter. She has never liked Methodists or the Non-conformist Churches in general (herself, of course excepted). And many Methodists are by no means sure that there is any real difference between Anglo-Catholicism and Roman Catholicism. Of course, all Christian sects are true Christians but, but . . . ! It is such a big "but". There are so many "separated brethren".

★

AN AWFUL question has upset Douglas Clark (*Sunday Express*, 23/5/65) "Why does the BBC sneer so much at religion?" It axes that masterpiece of perfect piety, *Lift Up Your Hearts*, while the "mockery of faith goes on". Mr. Clark is terribly upset. And he solemnly warns the BBC and its Director General that the people who pay their licences "will not stand for it if the BBC tries to go Agnostic".

★

NOW WHY should the BBC be a "Christian institution" at all? Why should the millions of people who pay licences, and are not Christians, meekly take the primitive and credulous stories of devils, angels, miracles, etc., which are regularly hurled at them, without protest? Up to recently any whisper of agnosticism was cut out of all broadcasts if at all possible. But now we are to have a series of Saturday-morning Humanist broadcasts (see Notes and News). Mr. Clark should listen and learn that religion has had its day, and has miserably failed.

★

CONSIDERING the enormous success of biblical epics on the screen, it is certainly surprising to find the Rev. R. Billington (*South London Press* 18/5/65) attacking them unsparingly because, "from a religious point of view they are a complete waste of time and very often very misleading and damaging to the Church". Another cleric calls *The Greatest Story Ever Told* a "disastrous failure", and "full of inaccuracies".

★

THE budget for Billy Graham's Greater London Crusade to be held at Earl's Court next year is £300,000 (*The Guardian*, 3/6/65). This sum includes £166,000 for rent of the stadium and administration, and £60,000 for advertising and publicity. Postal notices have, of course, been going out for months now to anybody who has shown any interest in Graham's past crusades, and a big attendance

is guaranteed. How many will be converted and how many of the conversions will be permanent are anybody's guesses. We should guess low in each case. But it won't prevent Evangelistic Christians thoroughly enjoying themselves, and we have no wish to be a spoilsport.

THE AGE OF UNREASON

(Concluded from page 186)

facts remain. The Hebrews carried the original Egyptian typism, i.e. "the lion of the double face", the old lion and the lion's whelp, exactly like the ass and its foal (as explained before) into their own symbolism over a long period right up to the present time. In modern Israel the symbol of the lion appears even on postage stamps! And it is needless to remind readers that the title "Lion of the house of Judah" is still retained by the monarchs of Ethiopia.

That Taurus played an enormous part, as Apis, in Egypt, and later on in the religion of Mithraism, cannot be gainsaid. And as to the eagle, "travelling North", it is a most curious fact that this symbol has been adopted by most Northern States on the Earth.

Not only is it the national emblem of the United States of America, appearing separately on the flags of New York, Iowa, Illinois and Virgin Islands, but it is also the national symbol of Germany, Austria, Poland, Spain and others, going right back to the Vikings.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

(Concluded from page 187)

reason that we are particularly interested in receiving members' comments on this subject".

It is to be hoped that those who oppose the present anomalous and anti-libertarian position of the Church of England will make their views known to the Council either as individual members or through one of the many organisations, notably trades unions, which are affiliated to it.

Through its affiliated bodies the NCCL now represents 3½ million people in Great Britain. At the AGM there were 121 individual members and 158 delegates from 22 national bodies, 13 district committees, 7 co-operative movements, 14 political branches, 33 local branches and 14 trades councils. Encouraging as this position may be, there is room for further advance, particularly in the field of individual membership. Money is very short and well-wishers are urgently asked to join and canvass affiliations.

GREEK TRAGEDY AT THE MERMAID

LONDON'S Mermaid Theatre is currently presenting a double bill *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus* by Sophocles. And these great plays are impressively staged, with imaginative sound effects and settings.

Bernard Miles is a fine Oedipus, and Liane Aukin is electrifying as Antigone.

Each play gains from being seen with the other. The plays are of course horrifying: men are presented as playthings of the gods, treated sometimes with vicious cruelty, sometimes with arbitrary favour. Despair about the human condition mingles strangely with patriotic eulogies of Athens, but this is great drama which has lived already for twenty-three centuries and deserves to live for many more.

I heartily recommend it.

M. Mc

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When searching for "Absolute Truth" you'll find
How many times the Churches change their mind.

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OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD. (Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

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Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society, (Conway Hall, Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, June 13th, 11 a.m.: Dr. PRYNCE HOPKINS, "A Humanist's Six Stages of Maturity".

Notes and News

ACCORDING to a survey published in *New Society* (27/5/65) 90 per cent of the British people want their children to receive compulsory religious instruction—of a Christian variety—in school. This, in spite of the fact that most of the adults never attend church except for the time honoured "hatches, matches and despatches". The crux of the matter, the *Sunday Telegraph* commented (30/5/65), is that "the majority of Englishmen still accept, with certain reservations, a morality founded on Christian assumptions". But do they? Or do they accept a morality which they mistakenly think to be founded on Christian assumptions? Some may wish to detach the accepted morality from its "theological premises", the *Sunday Telegraph* continued, "but unless they know nothing of children, they cannot hope to instruct the young in it without recourse to the images in which theology deals".

★

THEOLOGY deals, of course, in many different "images" (it would be foolish to deny that there are some moral stories in the Bible, for instance). But if the *Sunday Telegraph* means specifically religious images (a god, a devil, heaven, hell, etc.) then we deny that these are necessary—or even desirable—to the upbringing of a child. And it is nonsense to say that "Britain in a cultural if not religious sense, is still fundamentally Christian". A positive way of determining how many of *New Society's* 90 per cent were really concerned that their children should attend RI would be (as was recently suggested) to hold that period before or after school hours. How many parents would bother about it then?

THE REV. R. W. A. Coleman (in a letter in the same issue of the *Sunday Telegraph*) suggested that St. Paul might have been a homosexual. He made no secret of his aversion to marriage and wished that "all men were even as myself". If the homosexual theory has any foundation, wrote Mr. Coleman, "then the very hardships of the Apostle's life in the service of Christ now take on a strange unreality". But Mr. Coleman is sure that, if Paul was a homosexual, "he did not give in to sin", because he went out of his way to write, "none who are guilty either of adultery or of homosexual perversion . . . will possess the Kingdom of God".

★

THE world was likely to become "even more secular and non-Christian in the years ahead", the English Jesuit, Father Christie told graduates at the 69th annual convocation of Montreal's Loyola College on May 22nd. But secularisation of society was never inevitable, he went on, though it was natural to think that what had happened must have happened. The fact is, Father Christie said (*The Gazette*, 24/5/65) that "society is created by a series of choices and we are in many ways responsible for what occurs in our time". He therefore urged the students to bring their influence to bear upon "this secular and non-Christian world".

★

SIR Isaac Wolfson, Chairman of the Chief Rabbinate Conference in London which elected Dr. Jacob Herzog to succeed Dr. Israel Brodie as Chief Rabbi, made a plea for unity among the Anglo-Jewish community (*Daily Telegraph*, 31/5/65). Dr. Herzog would expect complete co-operation and loyalty. And with him, Sir Isaac said, "we can hope to combat the evils of creeping assimilation and apathy". By the force of Dr. Herzog's personality, deep learning, sagacity, and real spirit of dedication, Jews could make sure that they were no longer susceptible to the attacks of "those who would desire to make inroads into our ancient heritage", Sir Isaac added.

★

THE British Humanist Association has been given radio time by the BBC for a series of six talks on the Home Service at the peak listening time of 10.30 on a Saturday morning. The first programme will be on October 9th, and Professor A. J. Ayer, Dr. James Hemming, Lord Francis-Williams and Lord Willis are among the prominent Humanists who will be questioned by an independent interviewer. This recognition of organised Humanism—as the *Humanist* (June) points out—brings British broadcasting a step nearer that of several European countries.

★

ASKED by a previous correspondent why she regarded religious instruction on the Agreed Syllabus as more acceptable than that given in sectarian, particularly Roman Catholic schools, Margaret Knight replied (*New Statesman*, 28/5/65) that "more acceptable" was hardly the word but that in common with most Humanists she regarded Agreed Syllabus RI as "less harmful than the more full-blooded kind, simply because it is not so intensive, and because the doctrines taught are less frightening and incredible". But the Humanist aim was, she said, that "religious instruction should be what the name implies, namely instruction about religion, rather than indoctrination with the tenets of one particularly religion or sect". Mrs. Knight thanked the correspondent for his expressed willingness to support Humanist schools if there were a demand for them. But, she pointed out that there was no such demand: "Humanists do not . . . want their children indoctrinated with Humanism; they object to indoctrination in any form".

Reviews

A Welcome Pamphlet

Frauds, Forgeries and Relics by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. (Published by the North London Branch, National Secular Society: available through the Pioneer Press, 1s. 3d., including postage).

The decision of the North London Branch of the National Secular Society to reprint some of the classic Free-thought writings of G. W. Foote, is to be welcomed as something more than a commemorative gesture to a past President of the Society. There has been a tendency recently among some Humanists and Freethinkers to speak patronisingly of the limitations of the pioneers like Foote, Bradlaugh and Ingersoll, and to imply that their works are only of historical interest. The assumption is that the battle has been won. In one sense, the purely intellectual, this is true, but the news of the victory is being carefully kept from the mass of the people, and as many as ever are still being indoctrinated with exploded absurdities. The Roman Church particularly adopts the practice of proceeding on her imperious way, impervious to the findings of science or history, however deadly these may be to her claims. Lorenzo Valla showed in the 16th century that the Donation of Constantine, on which the Holy Fathers based their temporal power, was a complete fraud. They continued to misgovern a large part of Italy for a further 300 years. The fraudulent claim to power was not even abandoned after the Papal States were forcibly united with Italy in 1870; the Popes continued the dreary farce of posing as "prisoners in the Vatican" until they were bought off by Mussolini in 1929. Similar examples could be multiplied.

The 19th century Rationalists rightly saw the Churches as anachronisms and impostors which had been the major causes of the martyrdom of man. The more courageous of them were not afraid to say so, even at the risk of being guilty of "bad taste". The present attitude seems to be that God is dead, but we must all unite to keep the news from leaking out (Business as usual!), or when necessary to break it as gently as possible to the bereaved. It is time we got back to some Victorian plain speaking.

The present pamphlet is a reprint of two chapters from *The Crimes of Christianity* by Foote and J. M. Wheeler, and shows them at their devastating best, when dealing with knavery exploiting credulity for the greater glory of God, or the aggrandisement of the priest which has always been identified with it—by the priest.

It will not surprise those who reject the supernatural that "revealed" religions should have been forced to forge their credentials. The only surprise about Christianity is the massiveness, impertinence, and imbecility of its forgeries and the combination of ruthlessness and guile with which it has fought—for its own selfish ends—to keep the human race in a state of mental childhood. Foote and Wheeler trace the story from its inception in St. Paul, through the "Fathers" such as Ambrose and Augustine and the legion of anonymous forgers whose productions ranged from the bogus Sibylline prophecies to the Donation of Constantine, down to the Reformation.

The second part deals with the collateral manufacture of relics, miracles and legends. Here Foote finds ample scope for his scorching wit. The case throughout is documented from Christian sources. Their authorities such as Mosheim, Jortin and Millman were franker than our contemporaries, and in addition they held a faith that was, as has been wittily observed, worth rejecting. Foote's wit, like all the

most enduring wit, derives its strength from the deep insight into the nature of the subject on which he was exercising it.

The present pamphlet deserves a wide circulation. To have brought out such a handsomely produced 32 page pamphlet for one shilling, at the present period of high prices is—if the publishers will pardon the term—something of a bargain!

D. J. MCCONALOGUE.

Points from Books

IN Denzil Batchelor's new novel *The Sedulous Ape* (Macdonald, 16s.), a vicar notices that although America spends "a hundred million a day, or is it a year" on a war in Vietnam, nobody seems to know or care what the war is all about. Losing his faith, he decides to feather his own nest like the armament manufacturers. "Thou Shalt Not Steal" strikes him as a ridiculous commandment for this day and age. Why didn't Moses add: "Thou shalt not put through a business deal?" So he helps to organise an ingenious racket. Does his conscience trouble him when his crypto-homosexual curate gets murdered as a consequence? Not in the least, for he tells himself that penitence will simply be a way of making the best of a bad job if he is found out.

Detective Inspector Johnson, who has to investigate the vicar's sins and those of all the clergy at Pethbridge, is as contemptuous as he is certain that in the end he will make the dog-collared gentlemen feel sorry for themselves. The whole thing ends up on a beach in Italy where the natives are celebrating a dotty religious festival of feeding the cats, and where the local police commandant talks about the case of the nuns who were eaten by choirboys. A delightfully unusual and bizarre thriller.

I have only just come across a book which was published a year or so ago—*Beloved Son Felix* (Muller, 25s.). It is the translation by Sean Jennet of a journal kept by Felix Platter, a medical student in Montpellier in the 16th century. The diary was first respected in Renaissance times when men began to believe in the individual. Unfortunately much anti-clerical dynamite has obviously been lost because in medieval times little worth was set on personal records. Happily, Felix Platter lived when it was becoming possible to think of a diary as a serious chronicle worthy of preservation. It is fortunate indeed that this record has survived, for it gives an unadorned picture of religion in the ascendancy. Almost casually the student mentions seeing Protestants being burnt by Catholics in the streets, the monks from a monastery rushing up additional supplies of straw.

But perhaps the most authentic hypnotic quality of the entries can best be given by one short quotation: "Beatrice, Catalan's former servant girl, who had drawn off my boots when I had first arrived at Montpellier, was executed on the 3rd of December. She was hanged in the square, on a little gibbet that had only one arm. She left us a year before to go into service in the house of a priest. She became pregnant, and when her child was born, she threw it into the latrine, where it was found dead. Beatrice's body was taken to the anatomy theatre, and it remained several days in the College. The womb was still swollen, for the birth of the child had occurred no more than eight days before. Afterwards the hangman came to collect the pieces, wrapped them in a sheet, and hung them on a gibbet outside the town."

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

Thoughts of an Ex-Catholic

By PATRICK KEARNEY

It was Pope John XXIII who initiated the move on the part of the Roman Catholic Church to set up a study committee on atheism and Atheists. Now this is being done under Pope Paul. So the question, what is an Atheist? must surely loom large in the minds of Catholics. In this connection it would, perhaps, not to be amiss for the present writer to state a general definition, appropriately as I myself was reared as a Catholic.

Note, firstly, that Atheists are people who were formerly Catholics and Protestants; that is, they were reared as members of one or other of the main Churches in this country.

Secondly no real Atheist denies the existence of a God. He or she asserts that there is no evidence for one. But he or she constantly studies and searches his heart. It may be that there is a God. But we do not believe there is.

Some Atheists are opposed to organised religion, to the Roman Catholic Church, or the Church of England or the Church of Scotland. Why?

This could—and may well be for some Atheists—an academic question. But as religion permeates every aspect of life, including politics, it behoves anyone who considers himself to be an Atheist to protest primarily at the assumption (1) that there is a God and (2) that a particular Church is the proper aegis by which He can be served.

For the Churches do not confine themselves to serving God. In the case of the Roman Catholic Church the faithful are advised during elections, mainly on how *not* to vote, and in some places (such as Malta) how to vote. Catholics in the Trades Union movement, are sometimes advised when not to support a strike, as when, several years ago, Archbishop D. A. Campbell of Glasgow advised the faithful that a particular strike in the city was "communist-inspired" even though an article in the *Glasgow Herald* by a shop steward (Mr. Loughrin) pointed out that this was not the case.

In Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1943 the faithful were exhorted to support the policies of Hitler, even when it became obvious that the Nazi authorities were set on destroying the original Church. Only—repeat only—in the case of euthanasia did the Church officially protest to the Nazis, and the protest was immediately effective!

Of course it may be that the Roman Catholic Church is right to protect its interests irrespective of the type of government in power. And it may be that the Church of England is justified in owning millions of pounds worth of property in this country and in buttressing the middle-class way of life in the first of the great imperialist countries of the world.

It may also be that the Churches in America can justify so long denying of rights to Negroes—and finding biblical justification for it. It may be that every small sect (of which there are hundreds) can justify itself as having discovered the only true way of worshipping God and as pointing the way to the true moral life.

Atheists disagree. Firstly because they reject (after years of heart-burning and study) the hypothesis, secondly because they are aghast at the moral behaviour of many Christians and Christian Churches and thirdly, because the "ethic" of Christianity no longer meets the needs of changing conditions.

SPECIAL OFFER to readers of this paper. The Autobiography of Major Christopher Draper, DSC., entitled *The Mad Major*, First published in 1962 at 25s. A limited number offered at 10s. post paid. 230 pages fully illustrated and autographed from C. Draper, 2 Conway Street, London, W.1.

Responsibility for the Crucifixion

[The following letter appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle* on May 14th].

THE Pope's recent speech in which he renewed the charge of deicide, may have come as a surprise to a sympathiser like Father Corbishley, who wrote in your columns that "the common attribution to the Jewish nation as a whole of the responsibility for the death of Jesus has never been in any sense part of the official doctrine of the Church".

It was less surprising to others like myself who have expressed misgivings as to the value of recent interchanges between Jewish organisations and prominent members of the Church of Rome.

Only those who refuse to face historical facts can deny that the Vatican has been the main inspiration of this accusation throughout the ages. One need not look further than the records of such Popes as Innocent III, Paul IV and Pius V. The Pope's speech seems to show that of the Vatican it can truly be said *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*.

A charge of deicide is, by its very nature, contrary to reason and a travesty of justice. For it is the essence of a charge that each of its allegations shall be capable of proof.

While the fact of killing is capable of proof, an allegation that the victim is a Divine being is entirely incapable of proof. It rests on speculation or, at best, on religious belief and can be rejected by the accused with no less validity than it is accepted by the accusers.

If Jewish leaders were responsible for the death of Jesus, they were motivated by what they conscientiously believed to be their religious duty under the Mosaic Law (e.g., Deut. 13, 2-6). The act had at least as much justification as each of the numerous deaths by burning, strangulation and other methods of torture carried out on dissenters—Jews and non-Jews alike—by the Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages and at the Reformation in particular.

Catholics who are guilty of the monstrous injustice of holding the Jews of today responsible for the death of Jesus can, by the same token, themselves be held responsible for each of the countless acts of bloodshed and savagery carried out by such instruments of the Church of Rome as the Inquisition (set up by Pope Sixtus IV).

The persecution to which the Jews were subjected throughout the Middle Ages and after can be traced in largest measure to this same accusation. It was the cry with which the Crusaders, in the name of a religion of love, slaughtered and pillaged the homes of whole Jewish populations of towns in France and Germany.

Even in our own day it has been used as a means of incitement by antisemites, and the fanciful charge of deicide being regarded as a short cut to the grim reality of genocide.

Even today the Moslem Arabs are using the charge as a political instrument in their own war against Israel and are using every means to persuade the Vatican not to discard it.

All these facts add up to a damaging indictment of a Church which has not yet renounced an execrable charge against an innocent people. It should be the first duty of Jewish organisations to state the facts and, so long as that accusation persists, to restate them.

HARRY SAMUELS.

CORRESPONDENCE

"THE UNDISCOVER'D COUNTRY"

What consolation can the non-Christian possess to reconcile him to his inevitable death? He has no heaven to look forward to, but he may derive some satisfaction from the thought that he has no hell to fear either, so that Christian beliefs are a mixed blessing. But he may regard death poetically as eternal sleep, the quiet rest

from all the strife and constant battle to stay alive, the same infinite and eternal nothingness from which he originally came into conscious being when born and developed a varying acuteness of consciousness during life. We are all only half-alive much of the time, and physically death is a constant process. But as Hamlet pondered "... to sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub; ..."—can the eternal sleep analogy be pressed to this extent? On what grounds?

Someone once said, "No one can look long at either the sun or death" and this may be true of death if we fear it. Man has a strong instinct of self-preservation, indeed it is his strongest instinct, but he also has a cerebral cortex, a forebrain capable of much conditioning and capable of talking back to the hindbrain in which the instincts reside—thus by "will" he can conquer his fears. But should we run away from the facts by subterfuges and ignore them as best we can, or should we, like Montaigne "Philosophise and thus know how to die", and have death so ever-present that we fortify ourselves and prepare to meet it constantly, ever ready to die at any time. We may rather marvel that we are still alive than pine that sometime we may die.

A rejection of the illusion of eternal life may cause a great clinging to this earthly life and a desperate seeking for means to prolong it, a quest for longevity. Hence, the craze for vitamins, queer diets, yoga, herbs, etc. The worry and self-experimentation so induced may actually shorten life. A more moderate course is the development of sensible and healthy habits ("viability" one might call it) so that the inevitable decay is postponed without loss of vitality, an active present existence combined with a life-preserving tendency—since a tendency is all that we can be guaranteed.

A consideration of the vast universe and the eras of evolution can alter one's values, while an almost mystical appreciation of chemistry and physics can give a merging of the self in the flux of things, a merging into the "stream of life" so that the egocentricity fostered by Christianity is reduced and with it the fear of personal annihilation.

Better still if we can forget ourselves in some impersonal or larger cause or interest so that we value ourselves only for the contribution we can make to it. This may be all very well while we are fit and active but not when we are old or sick or destitute. The achievement throughout life of that detachment regarded by Bertrand Russell (and other philosophers) as the essence of wisdom is perhaps all we can hope for, mortal beings that we are, while taking whatever action to improve this life that is available to us.

D. L. HUMPHRIES, Australia.

A REPLY TO CRITICS

There is no vast difference between the Rationalist and the Christian in regard to pain. When a Christian is in pain due to some accident or disease he certainly does not try to reconcile his pain and agony with an almighty God Who is Love. If Mr. Adkins thinks otherwise then there must be something far wrong with his so-called rational outlook.

I know perfectly well that a scientific discussion on cancer is no consolation to a man suffering with cancer, no more than a theological discussion on pain is a consolation to any man in intense pain. What does matter is the removal of the pain, but what if it cannot be removed? The problem of pain is the same for the Rationalist as it is for the Christian seeing that suffering effects us all much the same way. Outside of that all is pure theory, but pain is real.

I'm not against Mr. Adkins and his like enjoying life, as he puts it, but how can you enjoy life in a world full of suffering unless you are a bit of an escapist?

Eric S. Barker thinks I gave views on cancer in my letter. I did not, nor did I imply that we should give up cancer research. If Mr. Barker wants to make his audience happy that's up to him, but I just wonder what kind of an audience he has in mind. A very superficial one no doubt. A man who lives well and happy in this world must do a lot of concealing.

R. SMITH.

[This correspondence is now closed—ED].

BROADMINDED

Who could say that the Free Church of Scotland was not broad-minded?

Speaking on the subject of Sunday skiing, the Rev. Angus McKinnon said at the Synod Meeting "that in his personal opinion he could not see it in the category of mortal sin *such as murder!*" The italics are mine.

M. A. WATSON.

MORE MYTHS

Your readers might like to learn more about Anup and Aan, the crucified thieves of ancient Egypt, mentioned by George R. Goodman in his article on Easter. These are actually one character,

generally known by his Greek name of Anubis. His appearance as both thieves may seem odd, but Egyptian gods often assume a double form.

John the Baptist also derives from Anubis. Here are some parallels:—

Anubis=Anup, Aan	John=Jan, Jean, Sean, etc.
Anubis baptises Horus.	John baptises Jesus.
Anubis the preparer of the way of the other world.	John the preparer of the way of the Lord.
Anubis cousin to Horus.	John second cousin to Jesus.

In the Gospel, John alludes to his and Jesus's solar nature in the words: "He must increase, but I must decrease". In the Church calendar John's birthday is Midsummer's Day!

As the constant comparison of the sun-god, Anubis might be termed the "beloved disciple". We can detect him again in Ananda, the beloved disciple of Buddha. Grasping a staff, Anubis carries the infant Horus, becoming the original St. Christopher.

Meri is the name of Isis as Nile-goddess, and the Virgin Mary is a carbon-copy of Isis. Joseph is clearly Seb, the step-father of Horus. Peter is Petra, who holds the keys of Heaven and Earth in the ritual.

All this and much more proves the utter impossibility of the historical existence of Jesus and his friends. The mythicist case is one of the best weapons we have in the fight against Christianity, and should be much better known to Freethinkers than it is.

R. J. CONDON.

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The Freethinker

Volume LXXXV—No. 25

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Sixpence

I FIRST read the late Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*—or parts of it—as a series of (I think three) long instalments in the *New Yorker*. The full work first appeared in this country two years ago. Now it is available as a Penguin for the price of two *New Yorkers* (5s.) and it is essential reading for anybody who has not yet encountered it. Essential because it concerns our very survival as well as that of many other living organisms. The danger it deals with comes not from the bomb—though radiation is not forgotten—but from chemical insecticides. And the story it tells is truly alarming.

Miss Carson did not say that chemical insecticides should never be used. What she contended was that "poisonous and biologically potent chemicals" were being put indiscriminately into the hands of persons largely or wholly ignorant of the harmful potential involved; that we have subjected enormous numbers of people "without their consent and often without their knowledge" to contact with these poisons. She further contended that we have allowed them to be used with "little or no advance investigation of their effect on soil, water, wildlife, and man himself". The limited awareness of the threat is partly attributable to specialisation—each seeing his own problem and not "the larger frame into which it fits". But ours is not only an era of specialisms, it is also "an era dominated by industry, in which the right to make a dollar at whatever cost is seldom challenged". And Miss Carson quoted the French biologist, Jean Rostand: "The obligation to endure gives us the right to know".

A Great Industry

All human beings, from conception until death, are now subjected to contact with dangerous chemicals. In less than two decades, the synthetic pesticides have been so thoroughly distributed that they occur virtually everywhere.

They have been recovered from most of the major river systems and even from streams of ground-water flowing unseen through the earth. Residues of these chemicals linger in soil to which they may have been applied a dozen years before. They have entered and lodged in the bodies of fish, birds, reptiles, and domestic and wild animals so universally that scientists carrying on animal experiments find it almost impossible to locate subjects free from such contamination. They have been found in fish in remote mountain lakes, in earthworms burrowing in soil, in the eggs of birds—and in man himself. For these chemicals are now stored in the bodies of the vast majority of human beings, regardless of age. They occur in the mother's milk, and probably in the tissues of the unborn child.

A great industry has been built up on the basis of research into agents of chemical warfare; an industry pouring forth "a seemingly endless stream of synthetic insecticides", very different from the simpler inorganic insecticides of pre-war days. What sets them apart is their "enormous biological potency". Not only do they poison, they "enter into the most vital processes of the body and change them in sinister and often deadly ways". And Miss Carson gave some terrible (documented) cases.

The chlorinated hydrocarbon Endrin, for instance, has killed fish, cattle and dogs. It caused vomiting, convul-

sions and loss of consciousness in a one-year-old child of American parents living in Venezuela, even though precautions were taken after the house had been sprayed to get rid of cockroaches. And this normal healthy baby became "little more than a vegetable—unable to see or hear, subject to frequent muscular spasms, apparently cut off from contact with his surroundings". In 1961, the *Lancet* published a report by Australian investigators on sixteen

cases of mental disease, all with a history of prolonged exposure to organic phosphorus insecticides. And as long ago as 1945, the *British Medical Journal* carried this description of the effect of a water-soluble paint containing 2 per cent DDT, overlaid with a film of oil.

The tiredness, heaviness, and aching of limbs were very real things, and the mental state was also most distressing . . . [there was] extreme irritability . . . great distaste for work of any sort . . . a feeling of mental incompetence in tackling the simplest mental task. The joint pains were quite violent at times.

Yet, eleven years later, American investigators conducting an experiment with DDT on volunteer subjects dismissed the complaint of headache and "pain in every bone" as "obviously of psychoneurotic origin".

These are but a few of the many—often disastrous—consequences of contact with chemical insecticides. Sometimes the result follows swiftly; in other cases the harmful or fatal effects may not be visible for a generation. Dr. David Price of the US Public Health Service has said that:

We all live under the haunting fear that something may corrupt the environment to the point where man joins the dinosaurs as an obsolete form of life. And what makes these thoughts all the more disturbing is the knowledge that our fate could perhaps be sealed twenty or more years before the development of symptoms.

Nobody could call *Silent Spring* a dispassionate book, no more than one could that earlier *New Yorker* scoop, John Hersey's *Hiroshima*. Nor was it ever intended to be (even the title is emotive). But how can one write dispassionately about an evil that threatens the very existence of the human and other animal species? Miss Carson did not, however, allow her passion to blind her reason: she was too good a biologist for that. It is the soundly scientific basis of its humanism that makes *Silent Spring* unique.

Man is never separated from nature, even in thought.

For each of us, as for the robin in Michigan or the salmon in the Miramichi, this is a problem of ecology, of interrelationships, or interdependence. We poison the caddis flies in a stream and the salmon runs dwindle and die. We poison the gnats in a lake and the poison travels from link to link of the food chain and soon the birds of the lake margins become its victims. We spray our elms and the following springs are silent of robin song, not because we sprayed the robins directly but because the poison travelled, step by step, through the now familiar elm leaf-earthworm-robin cycle. These are matters of record, observable, part of the visible world around us. They reflect the web of life—or death—that scientists know as ecology.

But we also have an ecology of our own—within our bodies—where "minute causes produce mighty effects".

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Right to Know

By COLIN MCCALL

and where the relationship of cause and effect is often complicated and obscure. "To discover the agent of disease and death depends on a patient piecing together of many seemingly distinct and unrelated facts developed through a vast amount of research in widely separated fields". We are apt, however, to look only for the immediate effect. "Unless this appears promptly and in such obvious form that it cannot be ignored, we deny the existence of hazard . . . The lack of sufficiently delicate methods to detect injury before the symptoms appear is one of the great unsolved problems in medicine". Toxic materials may be stored up in the body and their poisonous effects delayed. A New Zealander under treatment for obesity suddenly developed symptoms of poisoning. "On examination his fat was found to contain stored diethyldichlorodiphenylhydantoin, which had been metabolised as he lost weight". Other examples will be found, fully documented as usual. Footnotes are avoided in the text, but Miss Carson's references, arranged by chapter and page, fill 43 pages at the back, and are followed by a

15-page index.

While eminently readable, therefore, the book satisfies the necessary standards of a work of science. True, it starts with a short "fable for tomorrow", envisaging a "spring without voices". But this provides, in fact, a moral for today, and Miss Carson clearly indicated the imaginary nature of the setting. It was a composite picture. No community has suffered all the disasters that are described, yet every one of them has happened somewhere and "many real communities have already suffered a substantial number of them".

Silent Spring is then a timely warning, and one that has fortunately to some extent been heeded. It is tragic and terrible but not hopeless. Miss Carson's final chapter points "the other road" to an awareness of the problem of sharing our earth with other creatures—"with living populations and all their pressures and counter-pressures, their surges and recessions"—achieving "a reasonable accommodation between the insect hordes and ourselves".

New Morality or None at All

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

AT THE end of last year, a group of Oxford parents expressed concern, in written evidence submitted to the Franks Commission, about the "unhealthy incidence of mental breakdown, promiscuity, abortions and drug-taking at Oxford University" (*The Times*, 29/12/64). The parents included Mr. Garth Lean, and the Rev. Paul Rimmer, vicar of Marston, Oxford, the former being co-author with Arnold Lunn, of *The New Morality*, a narrow book which was an embarrassment even to Roman Catholic reviewers, and received an indifferent criticism in the *Times Literary Supplement* (27/2/64).

Freethinkers are, of course, very concerned with symptoms of malaise, especially when they appear among those who should have "lively minds" and may one day be "top people". But Baroness Wootton has rightly reminded us that one of the potent causes of these breakdowns is the linking of behaviour norms with disproved superstition. Here, Freethinkers have a great opportunity. Morality has been the great stock-in-trade monopolised for too long by the Churches. All of it—honesty, clean-living—can be supported entirely by pleas to rationality.

And the major Christian denominations—certainly the Catholic Church, with its system of "natural law", if not predestinarian Calvinism, or Lutheranism with its insistence on *sola fide*—have recognised for centuries (the evidence could not be refuted) that moral behaviour could exist apart from belief. But they believe it is rare, and difficult, and, by and large, this view that religion is essential to moral behaviour is probably one of the major reasons why people cling, for all their doubts, to some degree of church membership. Time and again people ask, if we drive religion from the schools, what will happen to morality? The fact is, every principle of good behaviour—social and individual—can be derived from reason alone!

The evidence to the Franks Commission strongly criticised the "destructive" attitude of some dons who "conceive it to be their duty to shake their pupils to their intellectual and moral foundations without giving them anything to take the place of the convictions they have destroyed". In a plea that Oxford should choose undergraduates for their "character potential", as well as cleverness, and that the University should make a deliberate effort to build up the whole personality, the writers continued:—"It is unrealistic to leave the whole burden of this work to the

college chaplains in an age where few undergraduates either attend chapel, or go to their chaplaincies for help".

We, too, have our views on these matters and we must promulgate them; we have our own remedies for these ills. Thus we do not think promiscuity is necessarily bad *per se* or because God has "fix'd His canon 'gainst" it. But we can point out that unlicensed sex may burden the studies which are the primary purpose of a university course, and do lasting psychological damage in undermining any capacity for permanent marital stability. This is apart, of course, from biological results! "Are you personally in favour of giving birth control advice and assistance to girls who are unmarried . . .?" Lord Longford asked the House of Lords some months ago. "I certainly am. It is common sense", replied Lord Chorley. It is indeed common sense. We may recall, too, Bertrand Russell's censure on Samuel Butler's "hero" who raped the housemaid as soon as he lost his faith!

It is a pity, perhaps, that contraceptives were withdrawn from sale at the University of Keele, last year. The present writer has often noted with astonishment that Christians sometimes seem to *want* unmarried girls to have babies—so that their "shame" should stand as a warning to others! And it was significant that the very next day after the report to which we have alluded above, the *Times* (30/12/64) printed a letter from a lady bewildered because a group of "charming teenagers" appeared at her door, sang "Unto us a Child is born", and explained they were collecting for International Family Planning. Birth-control knowledge is, of course, the real answer to abortion and its attendant dangers.

What of mental breakdown? Is this due in all cases to overwork? There is some evidence that it is at least abetted by irresponsible psychological experimentation. Drug addiction does not need a supernatural injunction; it wrecks the system, even if one is not deterred by the thought that the ruin of one's university career is a misuse of the public money one may be receiving.

The warning given by Dr. Sargant, author of *Battle for the Mind*, in a lecture for young people at the Royal Society of Medicine, on December 29th, 1964, might also be publicised to a wider audience. He said that some modern beats were still very primitive and produced the

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The Evidence for Jesus

By GEORGES ORY

FIRST, let us consider the texts which are said to be historic. Jewish writings give us no information of Christ; the *Talmud* has nothing certain to say of him; the rare passages which concern him form a polemic against the Christian tradition and can scarcely be regarded as a proof of the existence of the Jesus of the gospels.

The sole item of value in this polemic of the old rabbis is that they do not deny the Christian tradition; they interpret it to ruin it, to sap its foundations, but they do not oppose to it an earlier Jewish tradition; all that they had to attack was the Christian legend.

We can note that there was a certain Jesus ben Pandera who was assimilated to a Jesus ben Stada in the *Talmud*. The former was stoned and his body exposed at Jerusalem one Easter eve in the time of Alexander Jannaeus (106-79 BC). The latter lived apparently at the time of the Rabbi Akiba, about AD 130. He, too, was stoned to death and hanged one Easter eve, far from Palestine at Lydda in Asia Minor¹. Whether it is a question of two different men or of one personage duplicated in legend, the *Talmud* indicates that there was a Jesus a century before the gospels, who resembled the Jesus of the gospels. The problem becomes more difficult since the *Talmud* refers to yet another Jesus, a contemporary of Yehoshua ben Peraya who lived at the time of Alexander Jannaeus, i.e. at the same time as Jesus ben Pandera, and this Jesus is said to have founded a sect of Jewish apostates. Hence Salomon Reinach's surprise that there should have existed disciples of Jesus nearly a century before the Christian era², and an English author asks if Jesus did not live a hundred years BC.³

An Israelite student⁴ who believes in the historic Jesus writes as follows: "the appearance of Jesus in the period of confusion which occurred in Judaea under the Herods and the Roman Procurators passed so unperceived that the contemporaries of Jesus and his first disciples were scarcely aware of it; and when Christianity developed into a powerful and influential sect, the Israelite doctors were already too far removed from the time of Jesus to revive in its veritable aspect the recollection of the events of the life of the Christian Messiah and the facts of his existence . . ." Nevertheless, it is just on these legends and on the gospels that the author bases a work of 600 pages devoted to the life of Jesus the Nazarene. As Reinach wrote, "true history is not made from myths any more than bread is made from flower pollen".

In the Greek text of the *Jewish Antiquities* of Flavius Josephus two references to Jesus are to be found (xviii, 3, 3; xx, 9, 1). Both of these are interpolations.⁵ Apart from these, Josephus makes no reference anywhere either to Christianity or to messianism, and this latter he must certainly have known. This silence has been explained by saying that he wished to conciliate the Romans by leaving out anything they might consider disagreeable. It can be said with equal weight that the Christians have erased from Josephus anything which might be disagreeable to them or differ from their orthodox teaching. Neither is impossible, but they do not offer a satisfactory explanation of the silence of this man who lived from AD 37 to 100, i.e. just after the supposed career of Jesus, just at the time Christianity was supposed to be preached.

Other Jewish authors, well informed and celebrated in their time, are just as silent as Josephus concerning Christ and Christianity; Philo the Jew, born 30 BC, died AD 50,

ought to have mentioned Jesus and the Christians, for he wrote a *History of the Jews*; and similarly Justus of Tiberias who compiled a Jewish history up to the year 50 should surely have mentioned events which took place in the years 29-30. It is very astonishing that neither of these historians should make even an allusion to the gospel events. Our astonishment vanishes if we know that this Jesus was no man, but a god.

Nor do the heathen writers of the first century know anything either of the crucifixion of Jesus or of the Christians. Seneca (2 BC-AD 66), Pliny the Elder (23-79), Martial (40-103), Plutarch (45-125), Juvenal (55-140), Persius (34-62), Pausanias (c. 185), Apuleius (c. 170) all preserve a silence as complete as it is astonishing concerning Christ and his followers. Epictetus (50-130?) refers to Galileans, but not Christianity; he deals with those who, beginning with Judas the Galilean (6-7), were in constant revolt against the Romans and who gave rise to the Zelotes. Lucan, Seneca and Pliny all speak severely of Jews, but have not a word concerning Christians.

The attempt to include a reference to Christians in the message sent in 41 by the Emperor to the Prefect of Egypt is groundless, "Forbid the Jews to invite other Jews to come by water from Syria or from elsewhere in Egypt, for that will compel me to suspect them gravely. If they do not refrain from so doing I shall proceed against them with every means as fomenting a sort of disease common to the whole world". This refers to messianist or apocalyptic Jews preaching the end of the world and the coming of the messiah. Moreover what worried Claudius was not the messianism, which scarcely affected the hellenised Jews of Egypt, but the number of these fanatics and the violent anti-semitic feeling they aroused.

The earliest documents in Latin which, if it is not apocryphal, touches on Christianity, is of the year 111. It is the letter said to have been sent by Pliny the Younger when governor of Bithynia⁶ to the Emperor Trajan to ask him how he should treat those Christians who assembled every day to chant the praise of Christ as a god. The phrase "Christo quasi deo" proves that this Christ was looked on almost as a god, or the son of a god, or a sort of angel.

Ever since the 16th century the authenticity of this letter has been questioned.⁷ No matter, this letter would prove just one thing, that Pliny knew of Christians who worshipped a quasi god Christ, but not that he knew of a man Jesus.

About the year 120, Suetonius in his "Life of Nero" mentions the persecution of Christians without referring to the founder of the sect. In his "Life of Claudius" he speaks incidentally of the expulsion of Jews from Rome because they took part in seditious activities under the instigation of one Chrestos. Once again Jews; who is this Chrestos? An unknown Jewish agitator or perhaps Jesus Christ? If the latter mark that Suetonius places his coming in the reign of Claudius, i.e. AD 41-54. He could not therefore be the Jesus crucified in AD 30, but would be of the time of Paul.⁸ It is only in this passage concerning the burning of Rome (63) that Suetonius speaks of Christians.

Now let us look at the pretended evidence of Tacitus dating about 116-177. In his *Annals*, xv, 44, he reports that Nero accused the Christians of having set fire to Rome

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This Believing World

THAT once flourishing business under the patronage of Sir William Crookes with Miss Florence Cook as Managing Director, for the sole purpose of producing "materialisations" has been declining for years in this country. Happily, though in South America and particularly in South Africa, it has picked up enormously, and is showing fat dividends. Our own "famous medium", Douglas Johnson, has just returned from South Africa, where he was thrilled with materialisations galore at a seance under the auspices of another medium, Alec Harris.

★

MR. JOHNSON saw at least twelve full scale materialisations—"the finest sight I have ever witnessed", he declared afterwards. He even shook hands with his own spirit guide. Out of the cabinet came "a small smiling Chinese figure", "a doctor", "a six-foot Jew", "a young Cockney boy", and among others came Mr. Harris's own Indian guide. The audience even saw the complete materialisation of a child from ectoplasm, and the complete disappearance through the floor of another "materialised form". What a pity Mr. Johnson did not bring the whole circus to England!

★

STANDS Scotland where it once did so triumphantly on religion? It certainly does for ministers of the Free Kirk (*The Observer*, 6/6/65) were praying "for a miracle that would prevent the British Railways' ferry running out from Kyle that day at 1 p.m.", the hour when "sin will come and the island be darkened". Staunch Sabbatarians have always opposed any desecration of the Sabbath day, as they call it, Sunday is not the Sabbath day, but the day for worship of the Sun. Alas the miracle never happened, the ferry ran, and those who tried to prevent cars landing were arrested.

★

THE SAME journal headed an article, "Rome hint that Pope favours pill". But the fact is that Catholic women now are no longer content to be mere breeding machines at the behest of celibate priests. And, if the *Observer* report is true, it indicates that the Pope is at last shrewd enough to see where the wind is blowing.

NEW MORALITY OR NONE AT ALL

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same state of excitement, collapse and ecstasy as the rhythm produced by "stone age" people still living in Kenya. He reminded his hearers that "the human nervous system over 2,000 years has not changed. People in such states of excitement were susceptible to suggestion and could be made to believe and do all kinds of things". There you are. So if our university students do not want to hasten the arrival of 1984 they had better stick to Beethoven!

That nature abhors a vacuum applies to the human organism also. There is at least a case for Freethinkers to "examine their consciences" and see if, in the fight against the Churches—most vital, and one in which we may never relent—we have not concentrated more on clearing the ground, than on rebuilding. Some of our students seem, clearly, to have thrown the baby out with the bathwater. They may be agreeably surprised that not all who are concerned at their problems are Mrs. Grundies! We may do valuable service to them and society, by leading them back to paths of common sense and enlightened—as opposed to anarchic—Freethought.

THE EVIDENCE FOR JESUS

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and that this name of Christians came from the Christ who in the reign of Tiberius was executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate. He adds that this detestable superstition, suppressed at the time, had not only revived in Judaea, but also had made its appearance in Rome. Tacitus does not name Jesus; he takes the cultural title for a personal name: "Christ". Who are these sectaries formerly repressed, now once more in evidence? Is it the same religious body as that which was dealt with in Jerusalem in AD 30? Tacitus was writing three generations later than the events which he was describing—by hearsay, not by direct witness. It is rather astonishing that he should know more of the Christians than his predecessors. Does he confuse messianists of Nero's day with Christians of Trajan's reign?

(To be continued)

1. J. M. Robertson, *Christianity and Mythology*, p. 263; *The Jesus Problem* p. 112.
2. S. Reinach, *Orpheus*, p. 334, par. 31, Paris 1933.
3. *Did Jesus live 100 BC?* London 1903. An anonymous work of which the author was G. R. S. Mead. See also *Dict. of Christ and the Gospels* ii, pp. 877-882, art. by Travers Herford. Consideration of the passages in the Talmud where Jesus is mentioned lead P. Lagrange to write "in the Jewish writings the life of Jesus is sometimes placed in the time of Alexander Jannaeus and sometimes in that of Akiba or even later, giving a variation of two centuries" (*Le Messianisme chez les Juifs*, 1909 p. 289). Another writer notes "already in early days clumsy fables were common among the Jews concerning Jesus in which there seems to be a confusion between and amalgamation of several persons of different periods . . . the story of Jesus in the Talmud is so muddled that the rabbis of the Middle Ages, with the best faith in the world, could maintain that the Jesus of the Talmud was not the Christian Jesus (Isidore Loeb, "*La controverse religieuse entre les Chrétiens et les Juifs au moyen-âge*", in *Rev. Hist. des Relig.* xvii, 1888, p. 317).
4. Joseph Klausner, *Jésus le Nazaréen*, Payot, Paris 1933.
5. None of the three MSS. which we now have of Josephus is earlier than the 11th cent. Origen (*C. Celsus*, i, 47) tells us that Josephus did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, but Eusebius, about AD 320 found the contrary affirmation in a text, which, meanwhile, had been "improved".
6. It is not certain that Pliny ever was a governor of a province.
7. Notably by Havet "*Le christianisme et ses origines*", vol. iv, pp. 428-431. He observes "the sole MS. of this correspondence of Pliny with Trajan disappeared immediately after the publication of this letter so that we have no material proof that the letter was ever in the MS. nor that they were not manufactured by a latinist of the 15th century . . .". Note, too, that apart from this letter, Pliny never refers to Christians, neither in his private correspondence, nor in his letters to the Emperor, nor in his Panegyric. Arthur Drews (*The Jesus Myth*, p. 100) is of opinion that this letter was copied from the speech of Festus to King Agrippa (Acts 25, 14 et sq.) and that it was fabricated early in the 16th century by Giocondo di Verona, and finally that Pliny never was governor of Bithynia.
8. Josephus says nothing of the incident reported by Suetonius and speaks kindly of Claudius. On the contrary Acts 24, 25 emphasises the charge made against Paul at Caesarea "for we have found this man a pestilent fellow and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world . . .". Paul, please note, had a fellow worker named "Jesus which is called Justus" (Col. 4, 11) even as James, the brother of Christ was called the Just.
9. Battifol writes on this subject in *L'Eglise Naissante et la Catholicisme*: "The words of Tacitus cannot be taken literally. He depicts the situation as if between the death of Christ and the burning of Rome. Christianity had passed through a period of suppression and then just before 64 had suddenly expanded, not only in Judaea but also in Rome". Bruno Bauer (*Christ and the Caesars*) thinks that Tacitus found the fact of the condemnation of the founder of Christianity in the same archives as Tertullian found the record that at the moment of the death of Jesus the sun was darkened at full noon. This note in the *Annals* is the sole place where Pilate is mentioned by name by a Roman writer.

SPECIAL OFFER to readers of this paper. The Autobiography of Major Christopher Draper, DSC., entitled *The Mad Major*, First published in 1962 at 25s. A limited number offered at 10s. post paid. 230 pages fully illustrated and autographed from C. Draper, 2 Conway Street, London, W.1.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY. Every Friday, 7.30 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society, (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, June 20th, 11 a.m.: LORD SORESENSEN, "Problems of World Unity".

Notes and News

FOR nineteen centuries the Christian faith has grown, wrote the Rev. G. W. Butterworth in his *Sunday Times* reflections on Pentecost (6/6/65). It was "still growing" but "far from covering the world". But we should remember that "God loves the non-Christians as well as He loves us". And so, after acknowledging—in a typical understatement—that the "Church's history is by no means what it ought to be", Mr. Butterworth turned patronisingly to ask what must we do with the many other religions? Islam has "always displayed reverence, but not the vigour of work and freedom to live as Jesus taught us". Yet only a few weeks ago Mr. Butterworth had read in a newspaper that "a leader of Islam told his readers to be polite to Christians". Christians "must behave equally to them". For, "Better a respectful religion than none at all". So, too, with "the Eastern religion, which arose when the prince abandoned his wife and little child because of the misery he saw in the world".

★

THE Papal Commission on Birth Control has, the *Observer* reported (6/6/65), reached a "dead point" in its work. The majority is in favour of birth control, but the opposition group includes the formidable head of the Curia, Cardinal Ottaviani, as well as Cardinal Ruffini of Palermo, and Monsignor Kelly, Director of the Office of Family Life of New York. With things in this state of "paralysis", the Commission is unwilling to take final responsibility itself, and awaits a light "push" or "hint" from the Pope himself. There is, we are told, a widespread feeling in Rome that the Pope is in favour of the pill, and the majority hopes that the "hint" will come this month at one of the several important audiences. It is also learnt "unofficially" that the Pope has urged indulgence towards Father McMahon and Father Cocker, the two young British priests who spoke out in favour of birth control. Now

they, no doubt—along with the majority of the Commission—await a hint of that support.

★

THE divisive influence of religion has been demonstrated yet again—this time in Mauritius. On the eve of the country's independence, religion has assumed "some political importance", as the *Observer* put it. Indians—mainly Hindus—form the majority of the population, and the minority groups have "grown restless". British troops have therefore been despatched to the island in case of trouble. Children of one of the minority groups, the Muslims, were pictured being "carefully instructed in the correct way of praying towards Mecca".

★

"TO MARY conceived without sin" declared a banner to be used in the Manchester Roman Catholic Whitsun walk, in front of which the *Sunday Times* (6/6/65) showed three not especially bright-looking men. They, along with thousands of other men, women and children, were due to take part in the gaudy parade which would close the city centre to traffic on Whit Friday. On the previous Monday, the Church of England would have held its less showy walk. In the old days, it is said, Protestants used to pray for sun on Whit Monday and rain on Whit Friday: the Catholics the other way round. Now, of course, things are different: we live in the age of ecumenism. But there are still two walks.

★

MRS. AVRIL Stevens, aged 24, who already had two children, died giving birth to twins in Whyalla, South Australia, after she and her husband had refused on religious grounds to allow blood transfusions. The couple, who went to Australia from Yorkshire last March, were Jehovah's Witnesses. The first twin survived, but the second was stillborn, when Mrs. Stevens suffered a rupture and severe haemorrhage. Doctors said the complications could have been overcome if transfusions had been permitted, but legal authorities said that the couple had the right to refuse the permission (*The Guardian*, 8/6/65). Mr. Stevens said that his wife's last words were "No blood, no blood". They had discussed the question for years and had decided that if the situation arose no blood transfusions would be allowed. He added that he had no regrets.

★

AT THE recent General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, little was said—the *Sunday Post* pointed out (30/5/65)—about the alarming drop in Kirk membership. There has been a steady decline in the last eight years from 1,315,630 to 1,259,162—a loss of over 56,000. In the same period the population of Scotland rose by at least 20,000. An "expert who has made a study of the fall in Church of Scotland membership" attributes it—hardly surprisingly—to "the general scepticism of the age". The greatest increases in membership occurred in 1955 and 1956, a period of mission and evangelism on a great scale. But "Either the missions, such as the Billy Graham crusade, really accomplished nothing, or the Church failed to consolidate the increase in membership made at that time".

★

THE National Secular Society has arranged a trip, on Sunday, July 25th, to Lewes, Sussex, where Thomas Paine lived. The Mayor of Lewes has kindly arranged for the Town Book with entries relating to Paine to be on view at the Lewes Town Hall during the visit. There will be a conducted tour of the town by two local councillors, and lunch will be at the Bull House Restaurant, a building with close Paine associations. A coach will leave Central London at 9.30 a.m., and the cost of return fare and lunch will be £1. Applications should be made immediately to Mr. W. McIlroy, General Secretary, National Secular Society, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

The Church Militant

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

Persons: Sister Catherine; a young nun who has studied geology.
Sister Helena; a young nun who has studied psychology.
Sister Agatha; a young nun who has studied meteorology.
Sister Mary; the leader of the expedition.

The scene sketches the interior of some sort of igloo. The noise of the wind: and, in the darkness, the voices speak.

Helena: "Sister Theresa told you . . ."

Catherine: "Theresa is changing. She becomes so clumsy and gruff. Anyway, she hasn't had much experience. Medicine for the missions . . ."

Helena gets up cautiously and begins to pace slowly a few steps.

Catherine: (hysterically): "What are you doing?"

Helena: "Ghost walking".

Catherine: "Dear God, we're all ghosts! To think that I've lost my sight for an imbecile notion—the first expedition to the Pole by nuns to grab the headlines and publicise The Church Militant. How sordid! All we advertise, dear sister, is The Church Asinine".

Helena is gradually extending the length of her pacing.
Catherine (conciliatory): "All right, The fault is mine. I know Sister Mary's your special idol. So I've provoked my own doom. I admit it. Oh, I did so want to get away from the convent, far away . . . But that's something I should never mention, isn't it?"

Helena: "Since our wireless went caput and we had to dig in, all the unforgivable things are being said".

She strikes a match, and with fumbling hands lights a lamp to reveal Catherine stretched on a camp bed.

Catherine (excited): "You've lit a lamp, haven't you? I think . . . I can see something . . . like a cross . . . Oh, how beastly of you not to tell me. Do you think I'd inform your beloved Sister Mary that you've disobeyed her instructions about oil rationing? Are you as cold as all this ice that pretends to be decent, solid land?"

Helena: "It'll go on pretending. Don't worry. We're not drifting back to the convent. And all this ice has built us a good ice house, my child. If we can be proud of nothing else, we've at least proved that nuns can build an ice house".

Catherine: "An ice house . . . yes . . ."

Helena brings her face close and stares at the lamp.

Helena: "If only you could be a little less emotional, Catherine, you might look on snow-blindness as a therapy. There are things you don't want to see in your life. Your deep need is being acted out for you. If you co-operate, you'll find that, when you recover, you'll have recovered from your psychic trauma as well as from your physical and spiritual blindness".

She straightens up and begins to circle the lamp slowly.
Catherine (distracted): "It doesn't seem possible. I'm supposed to be a scientist, a geologist; and you, as a psychologist, are also supposed to be a scientist. And we are both sisters in Christ. Yet we're poles apart . . . Oh Lord, I shouldn't have used that word. Let's say we're miles apart. And you, you're just waiting to study the hysteria you knew would break out when women get together to do something that only men should do".

Helena: "The terms of my commission have always been that I should study the effects of strain. Now we must all find out that a thing need not be for ever for it to be too long. Well, I might give you another sedative, I suppose;

but, if you aren't in acute pain, perhaps we ought to remember that Sister Theresa may have more urgent needs for the medicine chest later on".

Catherine (wildly): "Later on! What do you think are the chances of a plane ever finding us when our beautiful ice home is so beautifully camouflaged with ice? You know about your Sister Mary? I'll swear she's the one who lost our course. It wasn't just a demon in the weasel-tanks which got us into this goddamned awful mess. Will you tell me that she's been acting out of deep need for some catastrophe? Then I'll answer that she can go to hell, if she's not already there. I'm sure she thinks I should have crawled out into the snow to die, so as not to hold up her precious expedition. That's the tradition, isn't it? But it wouldn't have made any difference. Look what she's managed to do. Oh, I ask for life and I ask for death in the same breath. Won't anyone have pity on me?"

She gets off the bed and stands tottering, holding out her arms. Helena sits down on a packing case.

Helena: "If you want to go outside and die, be good enough not to creep too far from the camp. Your body might serve as a useful marker for a plane".

Catherine (hissing): "No . . . no it wouldn't. I'd be covered up by snow in no time".

She begins to cry as another figure shuffles into the scene.

Agatha: "Shut up! Stop that blubbering. All heaven's outside. Even if you've seen the aurora a thousand times, this is The Light of the World out of this world. Great banners fluttering up to the zenith. Sheets of fire like crackling gelatine".

Helena (clinically): "Agatha, where are the others?"

Agatha: "Dear one, they're still looking for a seal for supper. Delicious old seal tasting of ancient mariners".

As she moves forward, she stumbles over a packing case.

Agatha (in anguish): "Mother of God, help me".

The stage is slowly flooded with coloured lights which reach an intense radiance. The wind noises die down.

Helena: "You can't see real things any more, can you. Agatha? And you've brought your vision in here with you, haven't you, your Northern Lights".

Agatha: "Oh, you're cruel, cruel".

Catherine: "One moment . . . Helena, you didn't know whether you'd lit the lamp or not, did you? I've only just realised you went blind yourself while you were watching me. Oh, it's monstrous . . ."

She moves forward and blunders into Agatha and clutches her round the waist.

Catherine (shrilly): "Come on, come on, we're the rescue party! Can't you hear the huskies galloping along, galloping along? You'd think the ice'd cut them like knives, but not a bit of it. Their paws ring out like velvet on the ice, don't they?"

Catherine and Agatha career crazily around, bumping into things and panting. Helena's control breaks, and she reaches out and joins in the mad dance. Then they pause for breath.

Catherine: "I say . . . what do you think of the man who's driving these dogs?"

Agatha: "Of course it's a man".

Helena (shouting): "Ahoy there?"

Agatha (simpering): "Rescuers, we're waiting for you".

Helena (loudly): "Shut your mouth and run for it".

They perform again, but now it is even more macabre for they remain stamping and staggering on one spot. The

coloured lights begin to fade. The wind noises are heard again. Sister Mary enters.

Mary: "In heaven's name, what's going on here?"

Helena (wrenching herself from the others and pulling herself together): "Mary, can you see me? You know I'm loyal. Tell me the truth".

Mary: "Children, I may be going down with a touch of this snow-blindness. But . . . it will pass".

Catherine (gasping): "So . . . ?"

Agatha (wailing): "What's to become of us?"

Mary (brightly): "That's right. Think of yourselves. It's the best rule for survival. That's why I gave up looking for the others out there".

Helena (bleakly): "Lost?"

Mary: "Lost . . . I'm afraid my children, that all God's little nuns are lost".

Helena: "You take it so calmly . . . Mary, you're wonderful. You're a miracle".

Mary: "Do you indeed love me, sisters? . . . as much as you love our Holy Mother Church?"

Agatha: "Darling".

Helena: "Darling!"...

Catherine: "Bitch".

History and the Bible

By H. CUTNER

AN ENFORCED leisure period in hospital recently enabled me to look up a few books which had escaped me. One of them was Sir Leonard Woolley's *Digging up the Past*, a little work which I found of absorbing interest. Thirty years or so ago, when the discoveries of Woolley, Howard Carter and other archaeologists were used to prove the truth of the Bible, Woolley in particular was quoted to me as having proved the story of Noah's Flood beyond doubt; while the historicity of Abraham and Ur of the Chaldees proved how closely the Bible had recorded historical facts.

Now whether Abraham was or was not a "prophet"—he is called one in the index—or whether Woolley really believed that discovering Ur actually meant that he had rediscovered Abraham, I do not know. But *Digging up the Past* says very little about discoveries in Palestine proving the Bible. On the contrary, indeed, Woolley says:—

In Palestine, a certain amount of scrappy digging has been done, but no connected history has been traced . . . There was no evidence for fixing exact dates because there were no written documents . . . The question "when did such and such event happen" cannot be expressed in terms of years. There is no empirical method of ascertaining such knowledge . . .

To put the matter clearly—so far, there has been precious little found in digging Palestine which has proved the Old Testament historically true. If any reader can show where I can find such evidence I should be grateful.

In the meantime may I be allowed to point out to "Ben Yehuda" (THE FREETHINKER, May 14th) and to many who think like him, that no one has unearthed a scrap of proof that David and Solomon ever lived—outside the Bible. Ben Yehuda, in fact, almost agrees with me. Instead of dealing with the two renowned "monarchs", he runs off at a tangent and courteously asks—"Yes, but what about Ahab and Omri? What about Jehosaphat of Judah?" In fact, he even makes it more difficult for me by throwing in Sanacherib as a make-weight. Moreover, Jehosaphat of Judah, he tells us, "was only the fifth after Solomon". How does he know? Why, it says so in Holy Writ!

But Ahab and Omri are mentioned on the Moabite Stone now in the Louvre. So what? I am not quite clear. Frankly, I cannot see why if the names of Omri and Ahab are there, why were not the names of David and Solomon also on the Moabite Stone? (Incidentally, I do not believe

in the stone's authenticity. Samuel Sharpe, the famous Egyptologist, and a Jewish rabbi, Dr. Loewe argued that it was a forgery. I have given a number of times in these columns why I believe they were right).

The truth is there is no evidence whatever for the historical David and Solomon, and the fact that some of the points I raised from the *Encyclopedia Biblica* were utterly ignored by Ben Yehuda, and that a Ahab and Omri—to say nothing of Shalmaneser—were introduced for discussion, shows the absence of evidence.

And this goes for Solomon's temple too. We are now told that "little work has been done on the traditional temple site due to the fanatical veneration for that spot and the building of the mosque".

I am not quite sure whether anybody now knows or ever did know "the traditional temple site", but I find the addition of a mosque to the discussion quite exhilarating. Mohammed flourished in the 7th century AD; Solomon's Temple was built in 1012 BC. I leave it to Ben Yehuda to work out the chronology—that is, how many centuries there were between the date of the destruction of the temple, and the building of the mosque on the site. It seems to me that there was ample time to preserve a few relics in a period of about 1800 years.

Just as a matter of interest; it is quite amusing to find a distinguished Christian scholar, the Rev. S. G. Green, in *The Variorum Teacher's Bible* admitting that the chronology between "the Exodus and the establishment of the Israelite kingdom" is "apparently irreconcilable". I relish the word "apparently". There are hundreds of clear statements in the Bible which are quite "irreconcilable" with other statements. Written by a team of first class Christian scholars, the *Encyclopedia Biblica* makes mincemeat of hundreds of Bible statements, and proves they are quite untrue. David and Solomon have to go the way of Noah, Abraham, and Moses—they are all myths.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION SURVEY

Mr. O. R. Johnston, lecturer in the Department of Education at Newcastle University is to conduct a survey among parents in Newcastle and Northumberland to find out how they feel about morning prayers and religious instruction in schools. Mr. B. R. May, of the Institute of Education at Durham University, is undertaking a similar survey in Durham. Questionnaires are being drawn up that will "require as little work as possible" to answer, and Mr. Johnston hopes to provide factual information which would be useful background material for any reappraisal of religious education. His own feeling is that "the vast majority of parents would like their children to receive it", but he thinks there may be a need to make attendance voluntary.

Humanist Councillor F. R. Griffin—in a letter to the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* (1/6/65)—hoped that Mr. Johnston's survey would be "a genuine and objective piece of research and not merely another boost for the Churches". If the exercise were merely to ask whether or not parents favour RI in schools, the answer could be foreseen. Instead, said Mr. Griffin the questionnaires should test whether parents favour: (1) religious indoctrination with the Christian belief as is practised at present; (2) the entire elimination of RI from the county schools; or (3) "RI as an educational subject preparing children for British citizenship and citizenship of the world where our neighbours are of many different religions and ideologies". It should also be made clear, Mr. Griffin added, whether the survey would cover voluntary, i.e. Church schools as well as county schools. Parents who sent their children to Church schools generally did so because they favoured the religious instruction given there.

NSS Annual Conference

NEARLY 60 delegates and members attended the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society which was held in Birmingham on Whit Sunday, June 6th. Most of them had also attended a reception given by the Executive Committee the previous evening.

Mr. David Tribe was re-elected President, Mrs. E. Venton Vice-President, and Mr. W. Griffiths, Hon. Treasurer. Mr. L. Ebury announced his decision not to stand for the other Vice-Presidency, and as there were no other candidates, Mr. J. A. Millar was elected.

A resolution was passed calling for the abolition of the blasphemy laws. These and other laws which are a violation of civil liberties will no doubt be dealt with by Lord Gardiner's Law Commission.

Those present welcomed the success of the Society's Secular Education Month last year, and were urged to intensify the campaign against compulsory religious instruction and acts of worship in county schools.

Resolutions were also passed deploring discrimination on grounds of race, colour, religion and sex; the payment of money from public funds to religious organisations; and the pressure that certain MPs are bringing to bear on freedom of expression on the BBC. A resolution protesting against Britain's entry into the Common Market was narrowly defeated.

A resolution that the expulsion of the late George Taylor from the NSS be rescinded was passed by an overwhelming majority.

CORRESPONDENCE

JOSEPHUS

In reply to Mr. Chris. Strother's letter. The undersigned would be much obliged if Mr. Strother would abstain from personal attacks based on totally unfounded premises.

As to his remark that Josephus "does refer to Jesus" which, according to Mr. Strother, is equal to an "historical nuclear bomb", I should like to point out that no scholar of any standing has ever doubted that the passage in Josephus is an *interpolation* by Christian writers who were dismayed that Josephus never mentioned Jesus!

Oceans of ink have, within the last 150 years been wasted on arguments about that obvious forgery in Josephus's writings. I shall refer to it in a subsequent article.

As regards Mr. Smith's letter that will also be dealt with in a special article, as it would be too long for the correspondence column. I shall be pleased to answer readers' letters, providing that the subject matter is of general interest.

GEORGE R. GOODMAN.

[Josephus's references to Jesus are also mentioned by M. Ory in his article on page 195—ED.]

THE WAY FORWARD

I happen to think that we, in the Freethought and Humanist movements, have Christianity on the run, but that we need to have a clear, general theory of social constructiveness before we can win through to the disestablishment of churches and religious theories everywhere. As Nigel Sinnott points out in a letter to THE FREETHINKER (14/5/65) we would be foolish to imagine that we can expect a Christian-dominated government to do other than continue "opposing every progressive idea and reform—evolution, anaesthetics, birth-control, women's suffrage, and education . . . divorce, abortion.

This is true and our role—if we are to be serious and get our ideas into practice—is to be prepared to take control of the state from them and get people who believe positively in our ideas in their stead.

To do this we must have a perfectly clear idea of the function of the state which will appeal not only to Atheists but to all fair-minded persons, even if they hanker after some forms of theism. Their beliefs may be an advance upon the fundamentalist nonsense which is managing to maintain an influence because of our short-sightedness in failing to distinguish between forms of theism which are compatible with science, and those which (like fundamentalism) are incompatible with science.

I believe that to gain control of the situation we must alter our

tactics here, and the ideas I have on the subject should divide the theists and bring the modern types of theist on to our side.

To put the matter as simply as possible I think we should declare that a form of agnosticism is the proper basis for a democracy. As Michael R. Evans points out—in an excellent letter in the same issue of THE FREETHINKER—we simply must recognise that the Agnostics have a point in declaring that *nobody really knows* what we really ought to think and do during our lifetimes. As I see it, a clear and forthright recognition of our fundamental agnosticism, in this sense, is required to provide us with a logical justification for our acceptance of a democratic system of state organisation which—unlike communism and fascism—includes freedom of thought and speech and association as civic rights.

Now it is well-known that many persons who continue to regard themselves as "Christians" or "Hindus" or "Buddhists", etc., etc., are, under the influence of evolutionary ideas, beginning to see the folly of the world continuing to be divided into armed or arming nations with the divisive purposes that local patriotism brings in its train. This is our opportunity. We can take the lead by appealing to these individuals to join us in aiming to create a world-wide democratic society and thus put the nationalists and racialists and traditionalists in all parts of the world to rout.

When this common front of persons who are concerned about the survival of the human race as a whole is formed I predict that the Labour and Conservative and Liberal parties in Britain will be split from top to bottom and we will find the reactionaries in all these parties combining to form an anti-humanist front and doing their worst with prayers for national survival, Union-Jack waving and monarchy-parading—not to mention NATO—and United Nations-praising which logically belongs to all forms of nationalistic thought which stems from the Bible and other ancient tribalist books.

The persons in those parties who are concerned about human beings generally and personally prepared to be on terms of common humanity with them will come together with us and—because we are on the side of human unity and human survival—will work with us to revolutionise the world in terms of our concepts.

I am convinced that this is the way forward for mankind.

E. G. MACFARLANE.

OBITUARY

The Manchester Branch of the National Secular Society has lost another member by the death in her 48th year of Mrs. Florence May Lord of Ainsworth, Radcliffe, Manchester, which took place in hospital on May 20th. Mrs. Lord was keenly interested in all matters concerning Freethought but was unfortunately dogged by ill health and unable to accomplish all she had in view.

The cremation took place at Overdale, Bolton, on Tuesday, May 25th, when Mr. Bayford addressed the gathering of relatives and friends and paid a last tribute to the memory of the deceased.

We extend our sincere sympathy to all members of the family.

W.C.

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The Freethinker

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ON AUGUST 7th, 1814, Pope Pius VII (1800-1823) issued a papal bull known (as is customary) from its opening words as *Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum* (The love for all the Churches). In it the Pope, who had recently returned to Rome after several years of enforced residence in France as Napoleon's prisoner, revoked the earlier bull issued in 1773 by his predecessor, Clement XIV, (1769-1774), suppressing the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits.

In his bull of restoration, Pius spoke of the great results obtained by the Jesuit order, adding that he would be guilty of a grave crime if he were to reject the aid of the strong and experienced mariners who volunteered to rescue the barque of Peter from the winds and waves. Upon which restoration, the German Protestant historian of the Papacy, G. Krueger, further comments: "From this point of view he was undoubtedly right, and those in power shared his appraisal. The following remarks of Victor Emmanuel I (of Savoy) who readmitted the Jesuits as early as 1815, have been handed down to us: 'I am persuaded that the Jesuits are alone able to defy a revolution. As I am resolved to use my last man and my last coin to crush the Revolution, it follows that I give the Jesuits liberty of action in my territories.'" The revolution here referred to is of course, the French Revolution which had overrun Europe under Napoleon.

One need only add that during the ultra-reactionary era of the Restoration after Napoleon's downfall—the generation of Metternich and of the Holy Alliance (1814-1848)—the restored Society of Jesus made itself so useful to the current reaction in both church and state that, writing a generation later, the great French liberal historian, Jules Michelet, was impelled to make the pungent comment: "Ask a man-in-the-street, the first passer-by, 'what are the Jesuits?' he will immediately reply, 'The Counter-Revolution'". Since when, the "Black Pope" (the General of the Jesuits) and his clerical bodyguard, have consistently pursued their self-chosen role as the Praetorian Guard or—to adopt a more modern simile—the SS men of the Vatican.

The Jesuits in 1965

Recently, the Society of Jesus has again made the headlines in the secular press. For a few weeks ago, the Jesuits elected a new general, the 27th (excluding their period of suppression in 1773-1814) successor of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Spanish founder and first general of the order (c 1490-1556). The new general is also a Spaniard, Father Arruba, the former Provincial of the order in Japan; a pagan land which, incidentally, has been the scene of some of the most spectacular alternative successes and failures in the chequered annals of the Jesuits. Not that one must imagine that the order though founded by a Spaniard, has ever been exclusively Spanish. For example, the last general was a Belgian and his predecessor was a Pole. For what a recent issue of the *Sunday Times* described as the "strongest, most secretive and best organised order within the Roman Catholic Church", whilst retaining to a remarkable degree its militant fanaticism, has long ago shed its

originally exclusively Spanish character and is now as cosmopolitan as the originally purely Roman Church.

The Old Guard versus Atheism

The Company of Jesus (to give it its original title) has now been officially in existence since 1540, with only that short break of 41 years after its suppression by Pope Clement XIV. Throughout this post-Reformation era—an era of practically uninterrupted crises as far as the Vati-

can was concerned—the Jesuits, in their capacity as the militant "Old Guard" of the Church, have been called upon to face successively a whole series of enemies. For the great order originally organised on military lines by Loyola to fight Islam, the hereditary enemy

of Spain, and to recover Jerusalem by a fresh crusade, has been diverted by successive circumstances and by the advent in particular of the Reformation into turning its attention to a succession of enemies: Protestantism, Liberalism, anti-Clericalism of various kinds. Today, however, the newly-elected General has been given a fresh commission by Pope Paul VI himself (as already recorded in the columns of THE FREETHINKER). On the eve of the recent electoral congress, the Pope gave the assembled Jesuit fathers the special and urgent task of combating atheism, the new and most dangerous of all the recorded enemies of Holy Church.

In its hour of need in 1965—as in that earlier hour in 1814 when Pope Pius VII restored the order—the Papacy yet again calls upon the strong and experienced mariners who volunteer to rescue the barque of Peter from the winds and waves. And the new General should certainly be strong and experienced. He has served in various countries and was in Hiroshima when the first atomic bomb fell upon the Japanese city.

Modern Don Quixotes

That strange product of Spain, Ignatius of Loyola, has sometimes been compared with Cervantes's Don Quixote, and it is true that the Jesuits were largely responsible for the Counter-Reformation that saved the Church of Rome from what must have seemed at the time an impossible position. Today however, the odds against the future survival of either supernatural religion in general, or of Rome in particular, would appear to be far greater.

The Jesuits are evidently aware of the present dilemma of the Church. For after all, Teilhard de Chardin, probably the most important Catholic thinker of this century, emerged from their ranks. It is true that he is still *persona non grata* at Rome, but then so was St. Thomas in his own lifetime! But it does not at present look as if there exists any way of bolstering up the visibly tottering structure of the supernatural against the ceaseless blows of the scientific battering-ram.

We rather fear, therefore, that Pope Paul's exhortations were in vain. For the countryman of Don Quixote, in seeking to demolish scientific atheism with the rusty weapons of theology, will again merely imitate his prototype by charging windmills.

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

God's Last Champions

By F. A. RIDLEY

The Problem of Loneliness

By KIT MOUAT

LONELINESS is a major and inescapable human problem; if not in our own experience, then in our responsibility for others. There is no automatic preventive, but there is, nevertheless, a great deal we can do about it.

The opportunity for physical intercourse between the sexes has increased, but promiscuity may be no more than an attempt to solve the lack of any other sort of communication. It is so much easier to "make love" (as we euphemistically call it) than to make friends, and the value of friendship has been overshadowed by an unrealistic attitude to love, while sex is driven from gutter to pedestal and back again, and by itself cures nothing. Until genuine co-education provides children with an opportunity to understand the opposite sex, men and women will continue to misjudge or ignore each other's needs. We have barely begun to discover where we are dependent on one another, and where we need to separate. The image of the female living only for a male who is only truly masculine when away from women, is fading but will probably survive until women are able honestly to describe their own feelings without fear of hurting their men or facing their scorn. Inarticulateness and boredom are serious causes of loneliness both within and outside marriage.

Most women have loneliness thrust upon them. Leaving school for a job with constant companionship, they find themselves, on marrying (or at least at the birth of their children) alone in a home, their minds filled but not fulfilled in the company of small children and a part-time husband who needs most to escape the demands of relationships by the time he gets home in the evening. Even when the intellectual nourishment is maintained, with little or no opportunity for discussion, loneliness can take a powerful and painful grip, so that a woman may flounder in regrets and guilt at a time when she has been led to suppose she should be happiest.

Children who are neglected or in the care of the unloving, the physically handicapped, the lesbian and homosexual, the unmarried mother and all those who break and pay the cruel price of our code of respectability, the vagrant, the incurable social misfit and the ex-prisoner, can only be rescued from what all too often proves an intolerable loneliness by the sort of education that develops our imagination and compassion. Their suffering is a tragedy and peril in our society, where fear and prejudice go hand in hand with ignorance, and ignorance abounds. The reform of our laws about sex, sick benefits, pensions, punishment, women's place in society and so on are problems that are being tackled by the Secularist and Humanist organisations. In human terms we cannot afford to delay; in terms of national pride, we cannot continue to lag behind the more progressive (if less religious) countries of Europe.

No one, however, needs an organisation to tell him or her how to make life more tolerable for the least fortunate in the community. Matrons of hospitals will usually welcome offers from Humanists to visit and run errands for patients who have no visitors, and fellow Atheists and Agnostics may be the most grateful of all for a change from the unwanted but persistent attentions of the clergy. In mental hospitals where atheism may, even today, be considered one of the symptoms of instability, perhaps we could be especially grateful.

Then there is the loneliness that comes from frustration, professional or sexual, which cannot be dealt with without confession, and too often cannot be confessed for lack of

words or out of loyalty. We no longer turn to ignorant priests for an empty ritual of enquiry and absolution, but we have not yet learned how to listen to one another with a tolerable balance of responsibility and detachment. Somehow we have to learn, for intelligent listening with real sympathy may be the only cure that is needed. Too many people believe that advice (like dogma) has to be accepted without question instead of analysed. Overconfidence as much as inhibition can create indestructible barriers, but we do not have to be a success ourselves in order to help others through failure.

There is the loneliness, too, of anxiety; justified anxiety that cannot be shared with anyone, and those unnecessary fears of which we are ashamed but which are no easier to bear for being the product of our too eager imaginations. There is the loneliness of old age and of undeclared pain which frays the personality so that everyone within reach is scattered as if by tear gas. And there is the final and ultimate loneliness of death. The suspicion or certain knowledge of its coming to someone else when we can do nothing to help may prove the most profound loneliness of all.

Although at death loneliness and complete isolation may coincide, it may, for those with inner resources and an outer antenna to life, be for the first time. But there is another form of isolation suffered by the unorthodox who are out of touch with others who share their fundamental convictions and attitude of mind. In January 1964 I started the Humanist Letter Network International in order to try and put Humanists, Secularists, Atheists and Agnostics in touch by post with others of approximately the same age group and interests. The Network is entirely independent and self-supporting, but is at the service of the British Humanist Association, the National Secular Society, the South Place Ethical Society and of all Humanists, Secularists, etc., whether members of an organisation or not. It grows rapidly with men and women from the age of 15 to 85, of all trades and professions, education and nationality. Widows and widowers, the divorced or separated, the housebound, the young who are unable to make contact with their church-going families, wives who cannot talk frankly with their ultra-religious husbands, all are enthusiastic about the potential companionship and intellectual exchange the Network offers. A very small fee is charged, and profits go to Secularist and Humanist projects such as the Agnostics Adoption Society or the school in Serowe, Bechuanaland.

If people who share the same language feel isolated from one another, how much greater is the loneliness suffered by the immigrant, the refugees or the displaced person who has never been fully integrated? How much more lonely must the non-Britishers in our midst feel when they cannot talk our language, and when their own social customs and courtesies do not coincide with our own? The very word "international" was coined by the great Atheist Jeremy Bentham, and only extending our loyalties from family to society, from country to world and from race to human race, can we hope to ease the loneliness we suffer ourselves or recognise in others.

Secular-Humanists have at once a special responsibility and, I believe, advantage. Essentially attached to a world that is gradually throwing off the religious shackles that prevent and threaten the scientific study of human needs,

(Concluded on page 204)

The Evidence for Jesus (2)

By GEORGES ORY

(Continued from page 196)

Tacitus associates the Christians with the burning of Rome in 64. If that had been so, if the Christians had been martyred by Nero at that time, the Fathers of the Church would scarcely have failed to write long chapters on the Neronian persecution. They did not; early Christian tradition is, on the contrary, mute on the subject. Neither the Epistles of Paul, nor of Peter, nor Revelation were aware of the collective martyrdom of Christians accused of having set fire to Rome. Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, even Melito, Bishop of Sardis about 170, who first among Christians alluded to Nero's cruelty, none of these mentions the persecution of Christians in 64. Tertullian, who made frequent use of Tacitus, did not find this passage in the edition which he knew. Two centuries after the pretended event, Lactantius, Origen, Eusebius and Jerome say that Peter and Paul fell victims to the Neronian fury, but they did not know that the Christians had been accused of setting fire to the city nor that a multitude of the faithful had been burned alive.

About 400, Sulpicius Severus repeated this accusation of Tacitus, but his text remained unknown to later writers. Nero and his crimes find no judgment in Dante. A silence of more than a thousand years concerning the persecution of Christians by Nero for setting fire to Rome is in itself a serious comment on the authenticity of the entry in Tacitus's *Annals* and in the *Chronicles* of Sulpicius Severus. The possibility of a forger inserting these lines into a MS he was copying in the 14th or 15th century cannot be thrust aside; all the more as Tacitus has no other reference to Christians save in this dubious context.

The name Christian certainly did not exist in 64; it was fabricated later in a pagan world to designate Gentile Christians and is first used by the Apologists Justin, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Minucius Felix, then by Ignatius, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, etc., i.e. not till c. AD 140; but after that date it may well have been applied to Jewish sectaries of the first century, thus allowing the new religion to be apparently of a good age.¹¹

We are told that "Christian" derives from "Christ", the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew "Messiah", meaning "anointed"; then we are told that the "anointed" man was Jesus, which does not necessarily follow. With equal right we can claim the early Christians and certain gnostics were at baptism "anointed" with oil, without reference to Jesus, in the name of the holy ghost or of the tree of life;¹² in the eyes of the pagans all these were "christs", ironically or scornfully as one might say the "oilies" or the "greasies", and not as the adepts of an unknown Jewish messiah, unknown that is to the Greek-speaking world. The title "chrestiani" is earlier than "christiani", and has nothing to do with "christ", "chrestus" means "good" or "agreeable".¹³

Hence we can affirm with certainty that the "Christians", as such, were unknown to pagan literature until AD 112—a very doubtful date—and to Christian literature before AD 140, a century after the supposed death of the founder in Jerusalem. This is confirmed by the discovery that anti-Christian polemic does not show itself until AD 160, the epoch of the disputes between Justin and the cynic philosopher Crescens. Justin also accuses "the princes of the priests and doctors" of the Jews of "profaning and blaspheming the Son of God throughout the world" (*Dial.*

Tryph. cxvii, n. 3). About 170, Celsus calls the Christian missionaries charlatans with an absurd doctrine and names a list of Christian sects, all gnostics, their rivalries and disputes. It is not one Christianity that he knows, but a multitude of Christianities of varying beliefs.¹⁴ In AD 130 Hadrian observed that the Alexandrian "christians" worshipped Serapis.¹⁵

At this time, the name of Jesus was still unknown to the Greek world although certain gnostic sects may have adopted him as their god about the years 115-120. As for the man, Jesus, he was quite unknown.

Are we to think that from the works of Jewish historians and of Greek and Roman writers all mention of Jesus has been expurgated by imperial censorship or by the rabbis and by the Fathers of the Church? There can be no doubt that on several occasions the books of the Bible have been destroyed and remade; Hebrew and Christian orthodoxy had caused to disappear a quantity of apocryphal, apocalyptic and gnostic works. Is it likely that every reference in every work should have been cut out? We find traces of other messiahs and, even in the New Testament there are clues to a Jesus who was not the traditional Saviour.

Had it been possible to destroy, revise, correct all the MSS, such treatment would surely have been impossible with regard to inscriptions, monuments and paintings. It was not until the end of the second century that the Christians had separate cemeteries in Rome, or even a third century, and nowhere in the Catacombs is encountered the Crucified Man Jesus; what is met with is, shoulder to shoulder with Orpheus and the Good Shepherd, the Celestial Christ, over whose beardless Greek face shines the aureole of the Sun Cross of Victory. Again we find the sacred supper of bread and fish which, not the Twelve, but the Seven are about to eat. The Marcionites, please note, ate fish and not meat. The earliest likely inscription which has come down to us is that of a Marcionite church at Lebaba near Damascus of date 318-319, and here is graven Chrestos (the Good) and not Christos (the Anointed); this is no Jesus.

That no profane author has attested the historicity of Jesus has been reversed into a statement that no such author has contested this. If these writers had never heard of Jesus they would have no grounds for denying his existence. Anyhow such a declaration overlooks the fact that we have gnostic pre-Christian fragments which teach of a spiritual Christ who was not yet humanised.

The writings of Celsus and Porphyry are known only by the refutations of their works; nevertheless we know that Celsus wrote of the Christians: "You relate fables and do not even give them verisimilitude . . . some of you have revised three or four times or even more often your evangelic texts in order to be able to deny what is objected to". Trypho too, wrote to Justin, "You follow a vain rumour and are yourselves the makers of your own Christ; even were he born and lived somewhere none would know of it". As for Porphyry, he asserted that the evangelists were the inventors and not the historians of the events they narrate concerning Jesus.

From this, we can observe that there were Gentiles who doubted the existence of Jesus, and that they were not the only sceptics. St. Jerome tells us that "in the time of the

(Continued on page 204)

This Believing World

WHAT strange ideas the average parson or priest has about agnosticism. Here we have Dr. W. R. Matthews, the Dean of St. Paul's, writing a lot nonsense in the *Daily Telegraph* (15/5/65) such as "there are several kinds of Agnostic", but cheerfully assuring us that "all of them agree in not being Atheists; they do not deny the existence of God". The truth is, as G. W. Foote pointed out years ago, an Agnostic is merely an Atheist in a top hat. No Agnostic would ever admit that the Christian God, the God of the Bible, could possibly exist.

★
DR. MATTHEWS insists that "God is; and God is love" but the Agnostic, exactly like the Atheist, claims there is not a scrap of evidence for these two "glorious assertions" which the Dean considers "central to our faith". No doubt they are, but both Agnostics and Atheists have long since laughed them out of court. In other words both Agnostics and Atheists disbelieve in the existence of Dr. Matthews's God.

★
WE NOTE that those stout-hearted Christians, the American Ku Klux Klan, not satisfied with their astounding success in the USA, are going to do their utmost in England against Jews, Catholics and Negroes. And already they are reported to have fixed fiery crosses to the doors of a few coloured people. Those responsible are called a "lunatic fringe", but is there a lunatic fringe in the Klan? Is it not lunatic to the core?

★
RECENT documentaries on heaven and hell produced by the BBC for television were actually the work of Hugh Burnett who calls himself a "Methodist Agnostic". His father once edited the *Methodist Recorder*. Mr. Burnett says that "Church and Sunday school taught me my Agnosticism"; and in spite of his upbringing, "irrationality and wrong thinking of all kinds obsess him". (*Observer*, 28/3/65). He finds in Yoga "the same illogicalities and Dark Ages naiveté as the beliefs about Heaven and Hell".

★
THE THREE lost children who were found in a coal bunker a week or so after disappearing were found by accident. We cannot help asking, what had happened to all our famous spirit mediums? Did they not help the police? A few years hence, when everyone has forgotten it, the case may well be cited as one in which the Spiritualists played a big hand? Every now and then we are told of cases which took place over twenty years or so ago in which mediums did help the police—cases of course which cannot now be tested.

★
WE LEARN that Christian women are being faced with a difficult problem. Should they wear make-up? And the London *Evening Standard* (22/5/65) devoted nearly a column to the momentous question. As one lady pointed out, "if the Christian life is all that it should be, we should so radiate the indwelling of Jesus Christ that no make-up is needed in order to be attractive". This argument is all very well, theoretically, but we all know that make-up can certainly improve the attraction of a woman, whether she has Jesus indwelling or not.

★
WE WONDER incidentally what has happened to the plea of women Roman Catholics that they should be allowed to preach. Year in and year out, women claim the same right to preach the word of God in nearly all Christian sects, but the male grip on religion is too strong. The ladies, it seems, have to be content with being Christianity's main supporters.

THE PROBLEM OF LONELINESS

(Concluded from page 202)

we must urgently encourage such research and learn how to deal with the results. We must also make sure that we do not substitute political dogmas for those of religion. Independent of gods and devils, we are used to taking the blame for "man's inhumanity to man" but we can also, with pride, give humanity and humanity alone the credit for what has been done by man for man. We know what can be done to ease the problem of loneliness if, with a warm heart, we put rational minds to it.

[The Humanist Letter Network (International) welcomes all enquiries, which are treated as confidential. Please send a stamped addressed envelope to Mrs. Kit Mouat, Mercers, Cuckfield, Sussex, England.]

THE EVIDENCE FOR JESUS (2)

(Continued from page 203)

apostles even, when the blood of Jesus Christ in Judaea was not yet dry, it was pretended that the body of the Lord was merely a phantom (*Adv. Lucif.* 23) and this is corroborated by several passages in the New Testament, notably 1 John 4, 3 and 2 John 7, which attack those who do not believe in the man Jesus Christ "and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God".

A belief is no proof of an existence. If it were, Hercules, the Centaurs and the banshees of Ireland can all be said to have existed. Nor can doubt be hailed as a proof, any more than absence of reference. The burden of proof is on the believer; not that of disproof on the disbeliever.

(To be continued)

10. The authentic MS. of Sulpicius Severus was found by Florez in the middle of the 16th century in a MS. of the 13th century; in this there is no reference to the persecution of the Christians by Nero. The Emperor Hadrian wrote after 130 that in Egypt "the worshippers of Serapis are also Christians and those who are termed bishops of Christ are devotees of Serapis".

11. The god Serapis, was surnamed Chrestus and its adepts could quite well be confused with the Christians. The same title was given to the underworld mystery gods of Samothrace and also to Hermes, Osiris and Isis. See note 10.

12. 2 Cor., 1, 21; 1 John 2, 20; 27.

13. Chrestus was a name used in Rome in the third century. Ulpian, prefect of the pretorian in 222, had two colleagues one of whom was named Chrestus—and Justin wrote (*Apol.* i, 4) "merely by this name we are the best of men". For the Marcionites Jesus was the Good god (*Adamantios*, ii, 9). The "Christians" of Pliny and Trajan may have been just "paulians" adoring their Good god, celebrating his heavenly crucifixion and awaiting the end of the world. "Chrestus" is moreover the first form of the title appearing in the unique MS *Mediceus* of Tacitus which a scribe corrected by scratching out the "e" and writing "i" in its place.

14. The name "Christian" is found only three times in the New Testament and outside the Gospels; it is not met with in the Pauline Epistles, nor even in the writings of Polycarp and Tatian. Harnack (*Missions*, i, p. 97, n. 3) quoted by Goguel (*La naiss. du Chr.* p. 211, n. 4) cites an unpublished text speaking of "Christians and Jews who believe in Christ"; this suggests that Christian Jews were not the same as Christians.

15. See note 11 and add that Sulpicius Severus, referring to Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius as persecutors of the Christians wrote that under Antoninus (138-161), there was peace for the Churches though Antoninus repressed a rising of Jews in 155; so discriminating between Jews and Christians.

SPECIAL OFFER to readers of this paper. The Autobiography of Major Christopher Draper, DSC., entitled *The Mad Major*, First published in 1962 at 25s. A limited number offered at 10s. post paid. 230 pages fully illustrated and autographed from C. Draper, 2 Conway Street, London, W.1.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

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OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill), Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

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North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY. Every Friday, 7.30 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS, (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, 27th June, 6.45 p.m.: Dr. J. FREMLIN, "The World Population Explosion".

South Place Ethical Society, (Conway Hall Humeist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, June 27th, 11 a.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM, "Education in Living".

Notes and News

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, who was in Australia at the time, was shown in particularly jovial mood on the cover of the *Sydney Bulletin* (27/3/65). Dr. Ramsey, the magazine said, moved about the country with speed and informality: "a cracking pace" which didn't "fit in with the popular picture of him in Church circles in England". But "wearing a life-saver's cap at Bondi or drinking billy tea" didn't make Dr. Ramsey a "with-it, rock'n'roll vicar". He offered no popular comforts: faith was hard, religion was not a cult of happiness, some questions had no answers. And, when asked by British interviewer Daniel Farson about the extent to which the Church had lost touch with the people, the Archbishop replied that he would prefer to say that "the people have lost touch with religion and God".

★

A WEEK later the *Bulletin* published an interview in which Dr. Ramsey discounted the view that science had outdated religion. Both should be "taught and understood" because both were necessary for an understanding of the world and it was "necessary for both to understand each other". Today, far more people than previously ignored religion, but where people pay attention the Archbishop said, it was "for the purpose of respecting it". The most important part of his work, he believed, was the movement for Church unity, which he saw "coming in two stages". The first would be getting "really friendly relations between the Churches" so that they treated one another as allies, not rivals. This was really going ahead. The second was the actual unity of the Churches. This was moving slowly but was happening. In England, Dr. Ramsey said, "the Methodists and Anglicans are trying".

WE recalled the other day, during a discussion on India, that Nehru's specific request for a non-religious funeral had been completely disregarded. The same week, Kingsley Martin—writing on the Nehru Memorial Exhibition (*New Statesman*, 11/6/65)—remarked on the "ominous" affair. Nehru declared in his will "with all earnestness that I do not want any religious ceremonies performed for me after my death; they would be mere hypocrisy; even if performed as a matter of form". Yet those in authority, "though certainly not his daughter", did in fact, as Mr. Martin said, make an orthodox religious ceremony of the funeral of the first Prime Minister of secular India.

★

IN THE same issue of the *New Statesman* another Kingsley—Amis this time—reviewed Wayland Young's *Eros Denied* (Weidenfield and Nicolson, 45s.), which has elsewhere been considered a little old hat. Mr. Amis doesn't agree with this judgment. He believed, like Mr. Young, that parents should tell their children as much as they want to know about sex as soon as they want to know it. As for how to tell them, "the question wouldn't arise at all unless the parent felt there was something disgraceful about what he had to tell". Or, as Mr. Young put it: when the question of sex comes up, we collectively say "Er . . ." instead of "Aha". Mr. Amis recalled reading about a police official who had been putting a stop to a teenage "vice ring" and who commented: "And all the girls showed a sickening familiarity with contraceptives". But why so sickened? Mr. Amis asked. The official ought to have said: "But all the girls showed a reassuring familiarity with contraceptives". Our collective morality, Mr. Amis concluded, "is based on an unwholesome mixture of envy and guilt, and for its repressive purposes, as for most such, the values of Christianity will come naturally and neatly to hand. No wonder the faith is so vigorous in its senescence".

★

TO THE *Guardian's* critic, Maurice Cranston, Mr. Young seemed, however, "rather like an aged warrior firing his rusty rifle in a war that has long been won" (11/6/65). And the young should be reminded that, "however bad repression is, the sublimation of sexual energy is the motor of most art and progress". This in turn was criticised by Kenneth Tynan as a hypothesis with no scientific basis of any kind (*The Guardian*, 14/6/65), the theory that "art and progress are contingent on continence" was, Mr. Tynan said, fantastic.

★

IT IS reported on page 207, that the USA is to issue a Thomas Paine commemorative stamp. And the hope is expressed that Britain should similarly honour the author of *Rights of Man* and *The Age of Reason*. We doubt, personally, whether the great republican will ever appear with the monarch on a British stamp—or whether it would be congruous if he did. We notice, however, that the GPO is currently honouring the centenary of the Salvation Army. Not, it is true, with a stamp (perhaps the bearded "blood and fire" General Booth wasn't considered an appropriate companion for the Queen either) but in the franking. "The Salvation Army, 1865-1965, A Century of Service" it reads. Mr. Anthony Wedgwood Benn, who unveiled a London County Council plaque to Charles Bradlaugh a few years ago, might note for next year that the National Secular Society—which Bradlaugh founded—is only a year younger than the "Army".

★

THIS Sunday (June 27th), the Ethical Union Housing Association is holding a garden party, from 3 to 5 p.m., at Burnet House, 8 Burgess Hill, London, the first house that the Association opened.

The Word "Mercy" and the Problem of Euthanasia

By MARVIN KOHL

ADVOCATES of voluntary euthanasia are committed to the view that in certain circumstances and with specific safeguards the taking of human life is merciful. Opponents, on the other hand, argue that an act of euthanasia is not an act of mercy and therefore should not be performed. Both parties to this dispute seem to agree that if an act is merciful it is morally justified. But they disagree about euthanasia being merciful.

To clarify the nature of this disagreement it is necessary to ask and answer two questions. 1. What, in this controversy is meant by the word "mercy"? 2. Is the proposition, "Some acts of euthanasia are merciful" true or false?

I shall maintain, first, that in this dispute the word "mercy" has been used equivocally, and second, that because of this equivocation we have at least two different propositions to consider, one of which is true, the other false. I believe the advocates and opponents of euthanasia are disputing two different points and, given the sense in which advocates of euthanasia use the word "mercy" it is true to say that "Some acts of euthanasia are merciful".

Consider the following situation: Two fluent English speakers, X and Y, appraise a case of euthanasia in which it is true (1) that the patient had excruciating pain; (2) that the patient had to die as a result of the conditions causing the pain; (3) that the patient, an adult, did voluntarily favour some means of "easy death"; (4) that the death was painless—and (5) that the physician was motivated solely by the desire to satisfy the patient's request for an "easy death". X and Y agree about the facts of this case. But they disagree about whether or not the doctor's act was merciful.

Puzzled by this apparent disagreement X and Y decide to paraphrase their remarks. That is, they decide to substitute other words for the word "mercy" without changing the original meaning of their respective statements. Instead of X saying "that was an act of mercy" he now says "that was the kindest possible treatment of an unfortunate individual". Instead of Y saying "that was not an act of mercy", he now says "that was an act of compassion and forbearance". This manoeuvre exposes the source of the misunderstanding. The word "mercy" being an abstract term is, more often than not, equivocated on when people argue that euthanasia is or is not merciful. Advocates of euthanasia tend to identify acts as being merciful only if they result in the kindest possible treatment of unfortunate individuals. Opponents tend to identify acts as being merciful if they result in compassionate and forbearing treatment. I think it obvious that when this is true the alleged disputants are making different but not contradictory assertions.

Of course this does not in any way imply that there are two and only two legitimate senses of the word "mercy". Other equivocations are possible but they are not as common. Nor does it imply that every disagreement can be reduced to a purely verbal disagreement. For this simply is not true. What I am suggesting is that there are cases where the only area of disagreement is whether or not a given type of act is merciful and that in many of these cases the disputants are not really at odds with each other.

Two objections usually arise at this point. One involves the notion that the word "mercy" has one and only one correct meaning. "Granted", the critic would say, "that

the word 'mercy' is often used equivocally. But it is one thing to say a word has been used in two different senses and still another to say that a word has been used in two equally good senses. Or, to put the matter somewhat differently, it is a mistake to suggest that both speakers have been equally duped by the language. The only one who has been duped is the speaker who points to the doctor's act and says "That is an act of mercy". What has he done that we must forgive? What impending punishment must we dispense with? What act of retribution must we abstain from? There simply is none. For a patient is innocent. Therefore it is a mistake to refer to an act, an act that involves an innocent patient, and say that "That was an act of mercy".

I believe that this criticism reflects a certain confusion and some errors of fact which I should like to clarify. It is certainly true that "compassion and forbearance" (or if one prefers "compassion and forbearance for an offender") is a perfectly legitimate sense of the word "mercy". To have mercy in this sense is to feel sorrow and pity for, as well as to overlook the guilt of, a being who deserves punishment. In this sense it is true to say that no treatment of a patient, that is, no treatment of someone who merely suffers can ever be merciful. But this in no way entails that it is a mistake to use the word in any other sense. By distinguishing between being merciful to the guilty and being merciful to those who suffer from disease and illness, one does not make a mistake. To use language differently is not necessarily to use it incorrectly.

The only adequate basis for correctness in a living language has to be the usage of native speakers of that language. Certain sequences of sounds have certain meaning only by virtue of the tacit agreement of the general community of speakers. This community can, under certain conditions, revoke its consent to established rules and set up new ones. Nevertheless, at any given time we can refer to the rules which are in force. We can also refer to violations of these rules.

A misdescription is just one of the possible kinds of violations. A misdescription occurs when a person uses a name to convey characteristics which a fluent English speaker would never associate with that name. It would, therefore, be a mistake if someone asks "What is mercy?" and you point to an act of painting and say: "That is mercy". But it is not a mistake to point to an act—an act which offers the kindest possible treatment to someone in great need—and say that "That is mercy". It is not a mistake because this is one way, a very common way, in which fluent English speakers use the word.

We now turn to the other objection. Here the critic makes a distinction between intention and fulfilment, between having kind intentions and being kind. He reminds us that wanting to be kind and being kind are two different things. And he maintains that the advocates of euthanasia neglect the more important question, of whether or not the actual killing is really kind. He concludes that euthanasia is not merciful because, with all the safeguards, the proposed act of killing is not kind.

Two reasons are usually offered in support of this objection. Each makes a different point. They are: (1) We are being kind only if we do what some God would do. And to be kind in His way is not to kill but cure. (2) The proposed act of killing is not kind because we cannot

prove, that is, we cannot provide empirical evidence that it is kind.

As to 1: If matching this God's ability to be kind is the only type of kindness the critic acknowledges, then he confuses kindness with perfection. But kindness is not synonymous with perfection. Every perfect act may be kind but not every kind act is perfect. The critic is demanding that we act as if we were living in a perfect world. Instead of asking "what should we do given our present situation", he asks, "what would we do if this were a perfect world". There is only one answer. If this were a perfect world he would not have to ask the question. I do not wish to be misunderstood. It is one thing to suggest that we emulate some God. It is another to demand that we do what this God himself would do or else do nothing. The latter demand is unreasonable. It is unreasonable because we are not gods. It is unreasonable because within the limits of human endeavour we can be kind.

As to 2: I think there is a reason why this criticism cannot be regarded as sufficient, but it seems not unlikely that it is partially correct. It is true that we cannot prove that an act is kind in the same way and to the same extent that we can prove, let us say, that an act is an act of running. But what follows from this? Only that it is usually more difficult to supply evidence for the former than the latter. It does not follow that we cannot supply evidence to show that a given act is kind.

Suppose we have a case of disseminated carcinoma metastasis before us. That is, a case of cancer where the cancerous cells have spread and have fully developed throughout the body. It is a case that meets all the conditions outlined earlier. We know (1) that the patient has excruciating pain; (2) that as a result of this condition it is beyond reasonable doubt, a reasonable medical doubt, that the patient has to die; (3) that the patient when told of his condition voluntarily favours some means of "easy death"; and (4) that aside from the desire to help the patient no other considerations are relevant. Now it is not easy to know all these things. And I am not suggesting that it is. Nor am I saying that such cases are as common as some advocates of euthanasia would have us believe. But that, if there are such cases then in these cases, it would be kind to kill. It would be kind because all the evidence indicates that this would be the most helpful thing that we can do.

In other words, I am claiming that there is a sense of the word "mercy" on the basis of which we can correctly say that a merciful act needs to be kind and that a kind act needs to be a helpful one. And that when we examine the evidence in cases like our cancer case, we know that the proposed act of euthanasia is the kindest possible treatment, because we know that it is the most helpful thing we can do.

Some of the material of this article, which appeared in the *American Rationalist* in April 1965, was presented before the Philosophy Club at Long Island University on November 19th, 1964. The author wishes to express his thanks to Mr. Robert Hoffman for his helpful comments.

ON BOTH SIDES?

You've got to decide—we are told in an anti-war ballad by the American folk-singer Bob Dylan—"if Judas Iscariot had God on his side". Which isn't quite so easy as Mr. Dylan might think. Certainly—assuming that we accept the Christian story—we must regard Judas's role in it as crucial, as part of God's scheme for man's salvation, Judas was, at least, the agent of God. Perhaps, in this instance as so often, God was on both sides!

THOMAS PAINE STAMP

FOR many years supporters of Thomas Paine in the United States of America have been campaigning for Paine's portrait to be on one of the country's postage stamps. News has been received that they have now been successful. Full details are not yet available, but the Thomas Paine stamp is to be one of a new series of 18 portrait stamps, ranging from 1 cent to 5 dollars, others in the series including Oliver Wendell Holmes, Einstein, Eugene O'Neill and architect Frank Lloyd Wright. The British postal authorities are so very much more conservative than the Americans in stamp design, yet the land of Paine's birth should not be too far behind the land of his adoption in this matter.

C.B.

THE VIRGIN'S SLIP

JOHN GRIGG (in the *Guardian*, 14/6/65) shared the following amusing story he had come across in *Paris in the Terror* by Stanley Loomis (Cape 30s.).

The Maréchale de Noailles, who had long been recognised as an authority on etiquette, went "harmlessly mad" in her dotage and "entered into a correspondence with the Virgin Mary in which she questioned the Queen of Heaven on the minutiae of precedence in the Kingdom of God".

Her confessor would answer these letters, signing them "Mary", but unfortunately in one of them he made "a small error of form", which did not escape the Maréchale. "One cannot expect too much of her", was the old lady's comment. "After all, she was only a bourgeoisie from Nazareth. It was through the marriage that she became attached to the House of David. Her husband, Joseph, would have known better".

CORRESPONDENCE

LORD'S DAY OBSERVANCE SOCIETY

May I take the liberty of seeking the hospitality of your columns to reply to the letter from Mr. John Shepherd of the 4th June?

I am glad to see that Mr. Shepherd has at last woken to the fact that the Lord's Day Observance Society is indeed a force to be reckoned with, that we do represent a considerable body of opinion in the United Kingdom, and that the large majority of Members of Parliament who have expressed an opinion on the subject of Lord's Day Observance are not so well disposed towards Mr. Shepherd's way of thinking. Mr. Shepherd has good reason to be upset over this state of affairs. Because he realises that facts and figures are against him, he resorts to insulting the intelligence and integrity of the Lord's Day Observance Society, and therefore of its Parliamentary supporters and the electorate who voted these Members into the Commons, by the use of such terms as "moronic" and "ghastly".

Mr. Shepherd concludes his letter by saying that he "was able to bring down in flames the West of England's Representative of the Lord's Day Observance Society" during a TV appearance. I think this self-congratulatory statement is based upon a bit of his own imagination rather than upon facts. In my travels through the West and South West of England and South Wales I have met and discussed with many people who, whilst disagreeing with the Lord's Day Observance Society, have nothing but contempt for Mr. Shepherd and the disgraceful behaviour he displayed that evening on ITV. His uncontrolled, unreasoned and unintelligible ravings did little to inspire folk who are anti-LDOS to support his so-called Sunday Freedom League. In his letter published in your paper, Mr. Shepherd says, "... I agree that dissertations on secularism should be scholarly, so giving dignity and poise to the subject ..." I suggest that he takes a lesson from his own notebook.

Far from being a heap of charred remains, Mr. Shepherd, I am still very much alive to continue, by God's grace, the work He has called me to do.

ALBERT T. PETERS,

Western Divisional Organiser, Lord's Day Observance Society.
AGNOSTIC ADOPTION

A remark in Mr. Tribe's article on Agnostic Adoption (*THE FREETHINKER* 4/6/65), is perturbing to me as an Atheist. I quote: "Applicants will be judged on social and ethical merit, and will not

be subject to credal tests". Does this mean that a child whose natural parents may have held strong anti-religious feelings may be handed over to a Roman Catholic, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Mohammedan, Hindu to adoptive parents of any of the multitude of superstitious beliefs? Even as an Atheist, I do not claim that applicants from these religious denominations can not offer a home of "social and ethical merit". My own home was of "social and ethical merit", it was Sandemanian.

At first glance this refusal to apply a "credal test" appears humane, but may it not defeat its own purpose? Is it not possible that religious bodies, in particular Catholics, may institute a campaign "to save these innocent souls" by applying to adopt children from the Agnostic Adoption Society in preference to any other adoption society?

EVA EBURY.

ATHEIST AND AGNOSTIC

The letter in the issue of June 4th reminds me that I have never seen the difficulty between the agnostic and the atheist. By derivation atheist is from the Greek *atheos* (meaning without a God). Has the agnostic God? I think not. So he is an atheist. There is no question of denying God but merely a refusal to accept the evidence put forward by those who assert that there is a God since it is inadequate.

Incidentally, I do not like the invention of terms designed to soften the impact of the word atheist and prefer to call myself an atheist rather than a Freethinker, Secularist, Rationalist or Humanist.

May I raise two points which might well be followed with more vigour when attacking the believers?

We should not let any Christian get away with the statement that he knows something such as "I know that my redeemer liveth". He knows nothing and should content himself with saying the far less forceful "I believe that my redeemer liveth".

Then there is the constant assertion by unbelievers that they think the ethics of Christianity are good. We should assert that the ethics of Christianity are inferior. The main basis is that one's conduct should be good because it results in a personal reward—"for great is your reward in Heaven". Good ethical conduct should not seek reward and in this respect the ethics of the atheist are superior to those of the Christian.

G. J. FINCH.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Secular Society was held at 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1, on Wednesday, June 9th. Present Mr. D. H. Tribe who was in the chair, Messrs. Barker, Collins, Condon, Ebury, Kuebart, Leslie, Millar (Kingston), Miller (Birmingham), Shannon, Sproule, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. McIlroy, and the Secretary (Mr. W. McIlroy). Apologies were received from Mr. W. Griffiths and Mr. F. Warner.

New members were admitted to the Manchester and Parent branches. There was discussion on the resolutions passed at the Annual Conference and the action to be taken. Congratulations were expressed to the Members of Inverness branch who had campaigned for the operating of Sunday ferry services.

Messrs. W. Griffiths, R. Sproule and Mrs. E. Venton were elected to serve as the Benevolent Fund sub-committee. The President and Secretary with Messrs. W. Griffiths and F. H. Amphlett Micklewright and Mrs. E. Venton were elected to serve as the Conference Agenda Committee.

Two press releases were ratified, and it was announced that a shilling booklet on secular education would be available soon. The next meeting was arranged for July 14th, 1965.

W. McI.

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The Freethinker

Volume LXXXV—No. 27

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EVERYONE has heard of Dr. Anne Biezanek, the Roman Catholic doctor, mother of seven, who has opened a birth control clinic and been barred from the sacraments. Most of us have probably formed a mental picture of her as a nominal Catholic only, for whom perhaps religion is—as for so many Christians—one of the peripheral things of life. Dr. Biezanek's own account of herself, in her book *All Things New* (Pan Books, 3s. 6d.) shows this view to be quite wrong. We have here a distinctively Catholic case for contraception, presented in semi-mystical religious terms. Reading discussions of contraception by such Catholics as Dr. Rock and Archbishop Roberts, firm Catholics though they are, one seems to be dealing with minds not so unlike one's own, but Dr. Biezanek, thinks on a different wavelength altogether.

Dr. Biezanek was born Anne Greene. Her parents are Quakers. As an adolescent she was deeply affected emotionally by the misfortunes of Poland. The Polish national emblem is a white eagle, which, with the help of poetry, Anne succeeded, to her own satisfaction, in identifying with the white dove of the Holy Ghost! Add to that the existence in Poland of an ancient painting of the Virgin credited with miraculous powers, which was ceremonially crowned by a papal envoy in the eighteenth century, and Dr. Biezanek comments, "Thus I had in my spiritual sights a nation that had the Holy Ghost for its uncrowned King and the Mother of Christ for its crowned Queen. That the issue of this royal union *must* be Christ himself seemed to me self-evident".

Conversion and Marriage

Soon after reaching this conclusion she joined the Roman Catholic Church—which, one must agree, seems the right place for anyone whose mind works on such lines. Nor is it surprising that, while still a student, she married the first Pole she had ever met.

By her conversion and marriage she had involved herself in desperate trouble. She was determined to be a good Catholic, so contraception was out of the question for her, and the traditional attitude of the Church—and of her husband—was that a wife should never refuse her husband love, and so some eight years after her marriage she was forced to return to her parents' home with five children. While she had had only four she had been working full-time as Registrar at a mental hospital, and providing a home for the family in a house that went with the job, but a further baby and a miscarriage led to a breakdown which made it impossible for her to continue work. After her return to her parents she again became pregnant, and after the birth of baby number six she spent some weeks in a mental hospital. However, this did not deter her husband, and soon she was pregnant again. She could then no longer remain with her parents, and the family was scattered. However, the Biezaneks did finally get a home of their own, in which their seventh child was duly born.

Now Dr. Biezanek thought her troubles were over, and

she could bring up her fine large Catholic family in the peace of her own home, but she was in for a nasty shock. She had seven children, four of them under five years old. She writes: "I simply had too much to do. The sixth child was still a night-screamer. These two youngest children alone, for over a year, had me out of bed three or four times a night, every night . . . Being over-tired, I was constantly irritable with the children . . . I never went out,

I never met anyone . . . In my constant battle to stop the chores getting on top of me, I was becoming coarsened, mentally and physically. Not—please note—refined by labour and suffering, in the manner that so many spiritual books would lead one to suppose, but

simply coarsened. I wanted, above all things, not to have children getting under my feet, not always to have two or three shouting simultaneously to gain my attention . . . I didn't care sometimes where they went or what they did, provided they left me enough elbow room in which to prepare the next meal . . . These are . . . experiences common to all mothers of large families. I had constantly and frequently, as a doctor, heard others complaining of just these things. It was only now that I was experiencing their full and undiluted horror for myself".

Desperate

Moreover Jan Biezanek's earnings in the Merchant Navy were not large, and when the two eldest children won grammar school places and needed spending-money and uniforms the position became desperate:—

"The anxious faces of the children as they hesitatingly told me of the money they had to have for this and that were a continual reproach. My explosions of irritability and wrath at every mention of these modest and innocent requirements precluded any possibility of true family happiness.

"Against this background, the thought of another pregnancy, with the nausea and tiredness it brings in its own right, took on the prospect of a nightmare . . . Thus did my husband's brief and unpredictable appearances in the home become in themselves a source of torment. As I wished the children out of my way, so did I wish him . . . Thus was I driven down the suddenly fashionable Roman Catholic line of thought that maintained that the solution to all marital problems of my type lay in the abolition of sex. My husband had to be banished from my presence, into a room of his own. Everything in me that attracted him to me and me to him had to be suppressed . . . Hate had become the order of the day".

The good Catholic home had become a hell on earth and Dr. Biezanek, in despair, started on the Pill in May 1962.

This was a terrible moment for her. So far she had accepted the official ruling of the Church, at an appalling cost to herself and to her family. Her whole ideal of herself, all her self-respect, was bound up with obedience to the Church's teaching, and the Church assured her that what she was doing was punishable by hell-fire. She told the priest what she was doing, and he said she could not

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

A Future Saint?

By MARGARET McILROY

have communion or confession. This involved her in further family difficulties, for her eldest daughter, taught by nuns, was begging her mother to come to communion with her. Dr. Biezanek decided to go and see what happened, first informing the priest that she was coming, and that she was still taking the pills. The priest did not refuse her the wafer, and she became again a regular communicant, though a bishop to whom she did not hesitate to explain matters told her that she was guilty of sacrilege "by continuing to receive our Lord" while sinning so gravely.

Dr. Biezanek is probably like thousands of other Catholic wives in her just determination to keep the rules laid down by the Church and her later turn to contraception when experience proved it to be necessary for her family's happiness. Thus far she seems to have been distinguished from the others chiefly by the grim determination with which she held out at the risk of her health and sanity; but now there emerges a still greater difference between her and less strong-minded Catholic women—her open acknowledgment of her actions and her increasingly firm and public insistence on the rightness of her decision and the wrongness of the clergy. Thanks to the pill her health and morale had improved, and looking back on the past nightmare she came to see it in an entirely new light. "I became convinced", she writes, "that God wanted me to make this stand, and that it was He who had brought me so near to despair, so that I should learn for myself how bullied and wretched Catholic women are. It became my desire to help such women".

Refused Communion

Having reached this conclusion she acted promptly. She attended a course run by the Family Planning Association, and opened a clinic, dedicated to St. Martin de Porres, in her own sitting-room. Again she took care to inform her bishop and Archbishop Heenan of her action, and these dignitaries "listened very politely". However the polite atmosphere was not to last, for this venture by a practising Roman Catholic received press and radio publicity, after which, without any warning, she says, as she was kneeling to receive communion, "The parish priest took the Communion plate from my daughter, who was before me, and passing in front of me, said out loud 'You don't get it.'"—a shattering experience for the whole family!

However, on May 31st, 1964, she was given Communion in Westminster Cathedral. She attaches great importance to the date, for May 31st is "the feast of the Queenship of Our Lady". Thus she writes, "On May 31st I received my freedom, not from Archbishop Heenan, whose conduct suggests that he does not greatly care what I do, but rather from the Queen of Heaven herself". Encouraged by letters of support from men and women of all religions and none, Dr. Biezanek has gone on to develop a theological defence of her defiance of the Church's ruling—on lines which will probably seem amazing to most Catholics as they do to us.

Dr. Biezanek accepts the story of Adam and Eve as literally true, stating: "The action of the wife, Eve, led to the disgrace of herself and her husband Adam . . . The terms of the sentence pronounced upon Eve was that henceforth was her husband to have dominion over her, that her conceptions were to be multiplied and in sorrow was she to bring forth children". Dr. Biezanek adds, "The long history of woman's sorrow in her position of bondage to a man is in itself a most powerful testimony to the truth of Holy Scripture". She shows the same lack of logic, the same sort of confusion between cause and effect, between symbol and reality which led her to become a Catholic and marry a Pole. This literal belief in the

curse of Eve had inspired the nineteenth century moralists who condemned the use of anaesthesia for women in childbirth. Dr. Biezanek seems to differ only in her bitter realisation of the cost to women of their degraded status. But suddenly she brings something quite new into the discussion, and we read, "The contraceptive pill has come to women as a heavenly reprieve from that primordial doom. It is my contention that this must be willed by God, and I say that the appearance of these drugs can be taken as a sign of God's pardon to Eve".

Co-Redemptrix

She links all this with a true Catholic emphasis on the Virgin Mary: "This reprieve for the daughters of Eve was won for them by 'the Second Eve', Mary the mother of Christ". Dr. Biezanek hopes and expects that the Church will be reborn by defining "the last Marian dogma" declaring Mary "Co-redemptrix" . . . "giving to the woman, the mother of Christ, a status in the scheme of salvation equal to that of her son . . . The Holy Ghost was so enamoured of her spiritual beauty that he took her to himself, and the issue of that union was Christ".

Dr. Biezanek is not interested in Mary's life-long virginity. "Her state of virginity in her married life can only reflect an attitude on the part of her husband", who "made no claim upon her". Dr. Biezanek will not accept Mary's married life and her method of keeping the family small as having any relevance to the problems of Catholic women today. Mary's particular virtue was her willingness, if God asked it of her, to face the consequences of premarital conception, in a society where this was punishable by death.

"Mary's obedience preceded that of her Son in time, just as Eve's disobedience had preceded Adam's. It has taken mankind all but 2,000 years to digest the meaning of these events, and until they were understood God did not think it good for women to benefit in too revolutionary a sense from the fact of the redemption". (What a swine Christians make out their God to be!) After attributing this hardness of heart to God it seems rather unfair to blame, as Dr. Biezanek does, "the theologians of the Roman Catholic Church" for being slow "to understand that it is the Almighty himself who is now pleading with them through the cries of distress of her own people".

Face-saving Formula

To her own satisfaction at least, Dr. Biezanek has found the face-saving formula which the Church so urgently needs. On contraception Catholics should "stop and consider whether the present official 'line' of the Roman Catholic Church does in fact represent true Catholic doctrine . . . It is frequently stated by Roman Catholic apologists that the Church has *always* opposed artificial methods of birth control, and that which has been consistently and successfully opposed by philosophers and theologians for the best part of 2,000 years cannot suddenly become right". But, says Dr. Biezanek, "What in fact the Church has condemned through the ages is birth prevention by means of abnormal sexuality". The invention of contraceptives which do not interfere with the nature of the sexual act *as experienced by the participants* completely changes the moral significance of birth control, and the invention of contraceptives has been willed by God himself.

Furthermore, "peace on earth depends on domestic peace, which depends upon sexual harmony", and "the purpose of the individual sex act is the maximum sexual satisfaction of the partners". In a very practical section, Dr. Biezanek discusses the relative advantages of different methods of contraception, emphasising that the method chosen should be one which the particular couple both

(Concluded on page 212)

A PROTESTANT ASSESSMENT

The Roman Catholic Church and Contraception

By VERNON C. GROUNDS

EVEN some of his most ardent admirers must be wondering by now whether Pope John XXIII was altogether wise in calling for an *aggiornamento*, a modernisation of the Roman Catholic Church. He evidently decided that the clanging engine of the Papacy needed to be lubricated and repaired: it was failing to keep up with the flow of traffic on our crowded 20th century highways. It looks, however, as though many of the ecclesiastical mechanics are in favour of repairs so radical that, if they have their way, the Roman Catholic Church will emerge as practically a new model.

Bishop Grotti of Brazil exclaimed in a speech at Vatican II:

What novelties we are hearing here! Opening the Church to everybody: pagans, separated brothers, women. . . . Women were silent for more than a thousand years and now some wish to invite them to these Council sessions, and not just to make *caffè* and *cappuccino*.¹

And women within the Bishop's Church are indeed breaking the silence of centuries. One of them is Dr. Anne Biezanek of England, the mother of seven children, a devout Roman Catholic who became a convert at the age of 19. Goaded by her personal experience and a sensitive conscience, Dr. Biezanek has opened a Family Planning Clinic in defiance of the ecclesiastical authority which, as a devout Roman Catholic, she otherwise obeys. In her book, *All Things New*, Dr. Biezanek throws down the gauntlet to the hierarchy on the issue of family limitation, arguing that here her Church must change its position whatever the cost, even if it means the open confession of past mistakes. From her perspective, a battle is being waged between the traditionalists and the progressives with the issue of birth control as a kind of Thermopylae; and a deadly battle it is despite the fact that all the participants are co-religionists.

The adherents of one viewpoint cannot afford to dismiss the others as "not truly Roman Catholic", any more than the participants on either side in a civil war can afford to dismiss the other side as "not really our countrymen". For they clearly are of the same country, they are truly present, and victory for neither side is possible until the other be overcome. So it is in the Roman Catholic Church now, nothing less than civil war. War that must be fought to the finish with only death or victory at the end. There is no compromise possible.²

Has Dr. Biezanek over-dramatised the birth control issue and its possible repercussions on Roman Catholicism? Not in the opinion of Paul Johnson, who had this to say regarding a courageous manifesto on contraception by Dr. John Rock, the eminent Catholic gynaecologist and Emeritus Professor of Medicine at Harvard University.

Significant was the failure of the Catholic authorities to condemn the book outright. Cardinal Cushing of Boston, in whose province it was published, gave it indeed a guarded welcome. When it appeared in this country, the reaction of the Catholic authorities was similarly muted. Evidently, the more responsible Catholic prelates were anxious to avoid a pitched battle. There was always a risk, however, that an individual Catholic might choose to force the issue and challenge the authorities to take action. This is precisely what Dr. Anne Biezanek has now done. The ground on which the Catholic hierarchy now finds itself could not have been, from its own point of view, more ill-chosen. Dr. Biezanek is a sincere and highly respected woman. She is herself the mother of seven children. Opinion among non-Catholics is overwhelmingly in her favour and it is evident that she has widespread sympathy and support among Catholics too. If the bishops attempt to crush her, they will certainly arouse the hostility of other Christian groups (and thus jeopardise the progress of the ecumenical movement), and they may also

provoke rebellion among their own flock. For the truth is that large numbers of Catholics refuse, in practice, to accept the Church's teaching on birth control . . . the bishops are well aware of this. They thus find themselves upholding a doctrine which is persistently and increasingly ignored by most of their followers.³

Johnson therefore thinks that on this issue the Roman Catholic Church is facing "an agonising reappraisal" which is obviously "fraught with difficulties." Is he right, and is Dr. Biezanek likewise right? Is the matter of birth control — seemingly so remote from the subtleties of theology and the realities of ecclesiasticism — becoming the very vortex of Pope John's *aggiornamento*?

To outsiders it certainly looks as though the Roman Catholic Church has officially and hence unalterably set itself against contraception. (Up until 1932 it was "unalterably" opposed to birth control in any form; that year, however, the so-called rhythm method was discovered by Dr. K. Ogino of Nagata, Japan, and Dr. H. Knaus of Graz, Austria; and since it was a natural method of family limitation, the hierarchy enthusiastically endorsed it.)⁵ Father Maurice O'Leary, chairman of England's Catholic Marriage Advisory Council, seems to have all the data solidly on his side when he declares: "There is no uncertainty about the Church's teaching on contraception. From the earliest times until today it has been condemned."⁶

Unquestionably the weightiest pronouncement on contraception is that made by Pius XI in his 1930 encyclical, *Casti Connubii*. Because of its importance we shall quote the entire section which prohibits contraception (except of course by the rhythm method), flatly labelling it "a grave sin."

And now, venerable brethren, we shall explain in detail the evils opposed to each of the benefits of matrimony. First consideration is due to the offspring, which many have the boldness to call the disagreeable burden of matrimony and which they say is to be carefully avoided by the spouses not through virtuous continence (which Christian law permits in matrimony when both parties consent) but by corrupting the natural act. Some justify this criminal licentiousness on the grounds that they are weary of children and wish to gratify their desires without their consequent burden. Others say that they cannot on the one hand remain continent nor on the other can they have children because of the difficulty whether on the part of the mother or on the part of the family circumstances. But no reason, however grave, may be put forward by which anything intrinsically against nature may be rendered conformable to nature and morally good. Since, therefore, the conjugal act is destined of its very nature for the begetting of children, those who in exercising it deliberately deprive it of its natural force and power act against nature and commit a deed which is shameful and intrinsically vicious. Small wonder, therefore, if Holy Writ bears witness that the divine Majesty regards with greatest detestation this horrible crime and at times has punished it with death. As St. Augustine notes: "Intercourse even with one's legitimate wife is unlawful and wicked where the conception of the offspring is prevented. Onan, the son of Juda, did this and the Lord killed him for it." Since, therefore, openly departing from the uninterrupted Christian tradition some recently have judged it possible solemnly to declare another doctrine regarding the question, the Catholic Church, to whom God has entrusted the defence of the integrity and purity of morals, standing erect in the midst of the moral ruin which surrounds her, in order that she may preserve the chastity of the nuptial union from being defiled by this foul stain, raises her voice in token of her divine ambassadorship and through our mouth proclaims anew: any use whatsoever of matrimony in which the act, in being exercised, is deliberately deprived of its natural power to procreate life is an offence against the law of God and of nature, and those who commit such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin.⁷

(Continued on page 214)

This Believing World

SO EVEN among Jehovah's Witnesses, there is a strong whiff of disunity! According to the *News of the World* (13/6/65), 25,000 of them were informed that 200 of their "brothers and sisters" had been expelled last year for "adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and other offences". We are not told why Jehovah allowed so many members of his flock to fall prey to such heinous crimes. But, put in another way, it looks as if there is precious little difference between the Witnesses and other Christian sects. Jehovah, just like Jesus, is powerless against the wave of "immorality" that we are told is now dominating Christian life.

★

BUT was it not always so? Are not the Middle Ages packed with the angry denunciation by Christian preachers of the "immoralities" of Christians everywhere, recorded for us by such writers as Boccaccio, Rabelais, and hosts of others? In fact, has there ever been a time when, exactly like Jehovah's Witnesses, people have not been attacked by similarly holy and righteous Christians.

★

THE ROMAN CHURCH appears to be faced with a different horrid crisis. There are actually fewer and fewer candidates for the glorious devoted work of priesthood. Young men don't respond to the appeal of a holy celibate's life, despite its promise of eternal life with all the past popes, to say nothing of Jesus and that prize bore, Peter. And Cardinal Heenan is at his wit's end to procure suitable candidates. For, as he says there "can be few more melancholy sights than a parish church without a priest".

★

HE PUTS it all down to "lack of faith and lack of priests" (*Sunday Express*, 13/6/65). So, alas, he has to leave the serious position "to the Almighty"; and when an Archbishop has to do that, it can be seen how very serious things really are in the Church. And in fact, more priests would not be any solution—in the ultimate. The general lack of faith is quite simply due to the realisation that Christianity is not true?

★

WE JUST love the way Christian writers have coyly changed the dear old-fashioned "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost" to "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit". A Holy Ghost is too much like a Holy Spook these days and that would never do. Even that Fountain of Holy Christian Piety, the *London Evening News*, prefers "Spirit" to "Ghost"—though we defy it to tell us what either means. "Spook" on the other hand is unmistakable. It would make everybody laugh—and Christianity has never been able to stand ridicule.

★

YET WE have the *London Evening Standard*, (9/6/65) showing us in a delightful picture how happy Christians can be displaying placards with the joyful news, "Thou shalt surely die". "The Wicked Shall be turned into Hell", "Repent and Believe", "Prepare to meet thy God", "The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh", and similar gems of biblical truth, shown in various public places at Whitsun. And no one can read the accompanying text without laughing—which the journal meant readers to do at these specimens of religious imbecility. What will the *Evening News* think of its London rival?

SPECIAL OFFER to readers of this paper. The Autobiography of Major Christopher Draper, DSC., entitled *The Mad Major*, First published in 1962 at 25s. A limited number offered at 10s. post paid. 230 pages fully illustrated and autographed from C. Draper, 2 Conway Street, London, W.1.

A FUTURE SAINT?

(Concluded from page 210)

find agreeable—never mind theology! She is well aware of the drawbacks of the safe-period method, which is impossible without the complete co-operation of the husband.

Evidently from bitter experience, Dr. Biezanek has a very clear understanding of the predicament of women whose husbands insist on their marital rights, while insisting that the consequences are something for the wife to deal with as best she can. What good does the Church's advice on "periodic abstinence" do her? The priest who fiercely informs her that any other way of birth control is damnable does not insist to her husband that he must limit his demands to the "safe period".

Dr. Biezanek also takes the Church to task for its emphasis on passive obedience. She asserts that this attitude is a product of the Renaissance, and she insists that a part of the Church's "very foundations in the Middle Ages is that the conscience of the individual has the force of law". In actual fact the medieval Church has an appalling record of persecution and massacre of heretics, and if it asserted the primacy of conscience it did so in theory only. Nonetheless, Dr. Biezanek has herself acted on the principle in her conflict with the Church authorities. It seems odd to find this courageous independence of mind combined with the extreme credulity she so often shows. It cannot be coincidence that this splendid stand has been made by a Catholic who had the advantage of a Quaker education, and was never subjected to the training in conformity which is such a basic feature of Catholic education. Even inside the Catholic Church she does credit to her Quaker upbringing.

In her the bitter suffering of Catholic womanhood becomes at last articulate. No priest has ever spoken from experience such as hers—a worm's eye view of the hopeless misery of caring for an impossible number of children and satisfying the sexual demands of an inconsiderate husband, while exhausted in mind and body from almost continuous pregnancy and loss of sleep. She herself believes that the wretchedness she endured before taking the pill was sent by God to prepare her for the work she is now doing, and the Church itself will very likely come to share this view. In the probably not far distant time when the Church has accepted contraception, this woman may well be venerated as an inspired pioneer, because she justifies the new approach to sex in mystical terms, and suggests a formula by which the Church can change its mind, while claiming to have been fundamentally right. My own prophecy is that in record time Dr. Anne Biezanek will be made a saint by the Church she at present defies.

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OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY. Every Friday, 8 p.m.: L. EBURY and J. A. MILLAR.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

South Place Ethical Society, (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday July 4th, 11 a.m.: Dr. JOHN LEWIS, "D. H. Lawrence in 1965".

Notes and News

THE greater part of this week's issue is devoted to the subject of the Roman Catholic Church and the Pill, a subject that affects not only Catholics themselves but literally the whole world. For, in a period of enormous population growth, the opposition of Catholic-dominated nations in UNO and WHO gravely hindered the spread of birth control knowledge among underdeveloped peoples. The Roman Catholic is not, it must be emphasised, the only religion that opposes birth control, but it is the most influential in the advanced nations and the most powerful internationally.

★

WE HAVE long insisted that the Vatican will be forced—as the expression goes—to “come to terms” with birth control. We have further argued that the Pill, differing as it does from other contraceptive methods, provided a likely escape route from the Church's now impossible anti-birth control position. No one familiar with papal practice would expect a sudden *volte face*. Infallible pronouncements, however misguided, cannot be completely ignored, especially when they have been reiterated in every Catholic diocese in the world. Pope Pius XII had, of course, condemned the Pill at the Congress of Haematologists on September 12th, 1958. It had become necessary about ten years before, he said, for the Holy See “to declare expressly and publicly that direct sterilisation, permanent or temporary, of a man or woman is illicit by virtue of the natural law from which the Church herself, as you know, has no powers to dispense”. The Pill—or, as the Pope put it, the use of medication—had as its end the prevention of conception by preventing ovulation. It was therefore an instance of direct sterilisation.

★

Dr. JOHN ROCK's *The Time has Come* was published in 1963. In August of the same year, a significant official

statement was issued by the entire Dutch Roman Catholic hierarchy. This expressed a concern for “marriage problems which cause anxiety in so many families”, and admitted that the Church had “no immediately appropriate answer ready” to meet all the questions posed by new biochemical methods for the regulation and limitation of human fertility. Though the oral contraceptive could “be no more accepted as the generally used solution to matrimonial distress that the already long known instrumental means”, Catholic theologians were, the bishops said, “discussing the question whether these means could be acceptable in certain circumstances”. The statement concluded with the hope that the second session of the Vatican Council would “offer the opportunity of discussing these questions in a broader context”.

★

MONSIGNOR McREAVY, might argue in the *Clergy Review* in February 1964, that there was “no real conflict” between the “prudently worded declaration” of the Dutch hierarchy and the “more explicit pronouncements hitherto made by the Holy See”; that they both rejected “outright” any contraceptive use of the Pill. But, however prudently worded, the Dutch statement did represent an advance—a development—from the lawful-use-by-nuns-in-danger-of-rape attitude. “Acceptable in certain circumstances” sounded cautious enough, but the framework was not a Congo convent overrun by “rebels”; it was the marital situation and its “problems”. Therein lay the significance of the declaration from Utrecht. The latter recognised what an English priest, Father Wilfrid Stubbs, called the “conscientious difficulties” of a Catholic married couple. Priests are, Father Stubbs had said in a letter to the *Clergy Review* in May 1963, “dealing with human persons and not machines” and anyone “who seriously equates a loving wife with a virgin in danger of rape, is out of touch with real people and real human problems”.

★

THE theological aspects of the problem were dealt with by Canon Janssens of Louvain in an article in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis* (Oct-Dec. 1963). “One must not have recourse to the use of progestogens when periodic continence is possible, and sufficiently efficient to assure voluntary and generous procreation”, the Canon concluded. But when periodic continence is not practicable or efficient (when for example, “it is difficult to determine the moment of release of the ovum; if the cycles are too irregular, if the temperature curve is imprecise; if instruction is lacking”) it “seems to us that it could be replaced by recourse to progestogens as long as they are used in the service of justified birth regulation”.

★

FOR British Catholics, the great sensation came with Archbishop Roberts's article in *Search* in April 1964. Not only did the Archbishop say openly that the reasons for the official Catholic condemnation of birth control did not convince him, he showed how the Church had definitely changed its teaching on other matters in the past. And, he concluded, “Those of us who can't see why or how to convict of crime the millions who see contraception as a right or duty in marriage—we certainly may and must press for the acceptance by the General Council of the ‘challenge’ to justify by reason our own challenge to the world made in the name of reason”. By and large, however, the English—or Irish-English—clergy has been conservative, or at least silent, Father Cocker and Father McMahon being notable and courageous exceptions. Courageous, too, has been Dr. Anne Biezanek, whose book *All Things New*, forms the basis of this week's articles by Margaret McIlroy and Dr. Vernon C. Grounds.

The Roman Catholic Church and Contraception

(Continued from page 211)

Language could scarcely be any plainer. Contraception is "a grave sin", "a deed which is shameful and intrinsically vicious", and which "the divine Majesty regards with greatest detestation", a "horrible crime" which "at times has been punished" even "with death"; and this view of contraception is by no means a novelty, a modern idea; it is, on the contrary, "the uninterrupted Christian tradition."

Similarly, in his 1951 Address to Catholic Midwives, Pope Pius XII asserted with respect to the pronouncement of his predecessor :

This precept is as valid today as it was yesterday, and it will be the same tomorrow and always, because it does not imply a precept of human law but is the expression of a law which is natural and divine.⁸

In that same address Pius discussed some of the reasons which may justify the rhythm method of birth control :

There are serious motives, such as those often mentioned in the so-called medical, eugenic, economic, and social "indications", that can exempt for a long time, perhaps even the whole duration of the marriage, from the positive and obligatory carrying out of the act. From this it follows that observing the non-fertile periods alone can be lawful only under a moral aspect.

But the Pontiff immediately goes on to point out that if

there are no similar grave reasons of a personal nature or deriving from external circumstances, then the determination to avoid habitually the fecundity of the union while at the same time to continue fully satisfying their sensuality, can be derived only from a false appreciation of life and from reasons having nothing to do with proper ethical laws.

And what if the rhythm method does not work ? "There is but one way open, that of complete abstinence."

Again in his 1958 Address to the International Congress of Haematology, Pius XII condemned the use of anovulant steroids. First, he interdicted sterilisation, rebuking "theologians animated by imprudent zeal and shortsighted temerity."

Sterilisation which aims, as a means or as an end, at rendering procreation impossible, is a grave violation of the moral law, and is therefore illicit. Direct sterilisation, permanent or temporary, of a man or a woman, is illicit by virtue of the natural law from which the Church herself, as you know, has no power to dispense.¹⁰

Then, turning his attention to drugs which inhibit ovulation, the Pontiff branded their use as "direct sterilisation."

A direct and, therefore, illicit sterilisation results when ovulation is stopped to protect the uterus and the organism from the consequences of a pregnancy which it is not able to sustain. Some moralists contend that it is permissible to take medicines with this latter intention, but they are in error. It is likewise necessary to reject the view of a number of doctors and moralists who permit these practices when medical indications make conception undesirable, or in similar cases, which cannot be discussed here. In these cases the use of medication has as its end the prevention of conception by preventing ovulation. They are instances, therefore, of direct sterilisation.¹¹

Once again, Pius XII in 1958 told representatives of Large Families of Rome and Italy :

The value of the testimony offered by the parents of large families lies not only in their unequivocal and forceful rejection of any deliberate compromise between the law of God and human selfishness, but also in their readiness to accept joyfully and gratefully these priceless gifts of God — their children — and whatever number it may please Him to send them.¹²

We now have before us all the important papal statements on this issue. Hence we are constrained to endorse the summarising conclusion set forth by Dr. J. Dominian in the *Catholic Herald*, May 22nd, 1964 :

There have been pronouncements from the Holy See in 1822, 1842, 1851, 1853, 1856, 1886, 1916, 1940, 1947 and 1955 con-

demning contraception, as well as the authoritative encyclical *Casti Connubii* in 1930 by Pius XI and the pronouncements of Pius XII in 1951 and 1958. While just short of a formal infallible definition, the teaching has been clear and consistent. From a moral point of view contraception is the deliberate intention and positive action taken by any means to deprive sexual union of its procreative potentiality and this is what is condemned. *It should be noted here that both the intention and the means matter.*¹³

To Protestants Dr. Dominian's conclusion appears irrefutable, and we fail to discover any ground whatever for challenging the statement of Father Maurice O'Leary which was previously quoted : "There is no uncertainty about the Church's teaching on contraception. From the earliest times until today it has been condemned."

We fail to see, moreover, how a conscientious Catholic like Dr. Biezanek can operate a Family Planning Clinic in the light of Pope Paul's allocation on June 23rd, 1964. In part the Pontiff said :

A problem which everyone talks about is that of birth control, as it is called, namely, of population increases on the one hand, and family morality on the other. It is an extremely grave problem. . . . The Church recognises the multiple aspects of it, that is to say the multiple rights, in the forefront of which are certainly those of married people, their freedom, their conscience, their love, their duty. But the Church must also affirm her own rights, namely that of God's law, interpreted, taught, favoured and defended by her. And the Church will have to proclaim this law of God in the light of the scientific, the social and psychological truths which in these times have undergone new and very ample study and documentation. . . . The question is being subjected to study, as wide and profound as possible, as grave and honest as it must be on a subject of such importance. It is under study which we may say, we hope will soon be completed with the co-operation of many and outstanding experts. . . . But meanwhile we say frankly that up to now we do not have sufficient motive to consider out of date and therefore not binding the norms given by Pope Pius XII in this regard. Therefore they must be considered valid, at least until we feel obliged in conscience to change them.¹⁴

This has all the earmarks of an authoritative directive : "the norms given by Pope Pius XII" are still "valid" and consequently "binding". And when any pontiff thus speaks his mind, the faithful Catholic, as we understand his duty, has no option but obedience. Indeed, a noted moralist, Father J. C. Ford, S J, wrote with respect to Pius XII's interdiction of all contraceptive techniques other than the rhythm method :

On 12th September, 1958, Pope Pius XII clearly and explicitly rejected as immoral the contraceptive use of drugs, pills or medicines which "by preventing ovulation make fecundation impossible." There can be no doubt but he intended this teaching to be binding in conscience. It is true that theologians do not consider that such moral pronouncements are proposed to the faithful like an article of faith with infallible authority. But . . . his authoritative pronouncements call for acceptance, and . . . are binding in practice on the consciences of Catholics.¹⁵

Nor is that all. Unquestioning obedience is demanded of a good Catholic even when an ordinary Bishop speaks, to say nothing of the Pope. It is precisely this suffocating authoritarianism, implicit if not too frequently overt, which calls forth the protest of a layman like Daniel Callahan in trenchant criticism, *Honesty in the Church*. Callahan cites the dictum of a reputable theologian concerning a layman's subordination to his bishop and this dictum dates not from the Middle Ages but from 1962 and the United States of America !

The bishop is the ruler, the shepherd sent by Christ to his territory. The layman is responsible for his own personal life. He must rule his own life as directed by the bishop who stands for Christ. He must follow the bishop's teaching in the domain of the natural law, in the moral aspects of the social

and political spheres, in the area of canon law, even in the application of these laws of Christ to his own personal decision. This is a true act of maturity. It is to rule one's life according to the will of Christ.¹⁶

No wonder Dr. Biezaneck complains that her Church and she insists on remaining a faithful member of it) is a repressive system of totalitarianism which leaves no room for conscience!¹⁷ How, then, do conscientious Catholics, deciding to abide within the papal fold, justify their advocacy of contraception? Since the Popes have forbidden the practice of contraception, why does a Dr. Biezaneck dispute the traditional and authoritative position of her Church? This is an interesting question... We simply raise some related questions which may embarrass Roman Catholics but which we as Protestants raise in sincere perplexity.

Does the infallible guide sometimes strangely disappoint floundering Roman Catholics by refusing to speak until it perceives the direction the wind is blowing? Then does it belatedly put its rationalised *imprimatur* on a *de facto* situation which has developed? In short, is the infallible guide afflicted with a fallibility which nullifies its claim to infallibility?

There are Roman Catholics who insist that they possess a certainty which bewildered Protestants might well envy. For example, Father O'Leary roundly affirms: "We have his certainty from the teaching of the Church, that contraception is intrinsically immoral, and no opinion to the contrary may be allowed."¹⁸ But Daniel Callahan, a contemporary Diogenes, flatly contradicts his co-religionist:

The Catholic is supposed to be indistinguishable from other men by his absolute certainty, his unwavering devotion, his secure conviction that his search for truth has come to an end. The individual Catholic often does his part to sustain this preconception. To the outsider he will present the solid presence, one which carefully conceals any problems he may be having. Even to other Catholics, he may not fully reveal him-

self; his inner restlessness will be masked consistently and effectively. In hard fact, however, the Catholic may be as much subject to uncertainty as the next man. This is particularly true today. For the past decade the Church has been in the midst of a tremendous upheaval. Many practices once thought permanent have been called into question by the Second Vatican Council. Many teachings, once thought unquestionable, have been subject to intense analysis and criticism. Many hesitations, once carefully hidden, have now come into the open. While much of this rumbling is the natural fruit of a desire for renewal in the Church, it has also unmistakably revealed the existence of the subterranean life in the Church far more complex than the bland surface that appears in theology manuals.¹⁹

Perhaps, therefore, conscientious Roman Catholics are being driven to "an agonising reappraisal" which will be far more excruciating than they had at first imagined it would be.

[Reprinted from *Christian Heritage*, June 1965]

1. Quoted by William Birmingham, "Authority, Dissent, and Modern Needs," ed. William Birmingham, *What Modern Catholics Think About Birth Control*, a Signet Book, 1964, pp. 85-86.
2. Anne Biezaneck, *All Things New*, 1964, p. 99.
3. Quoted in *The Pill*, ed. Leo Pyle, p. 62.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
5. Those who are concerned about the details of this dramatic reversal will find them conveniently assembled in Elvah W. Sulloway, *Birth Control and Catholic Doctrine* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), pp. 155ff.
6. Quoted in Leo Pyle, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
7. Quoted by Leslie Dewart, "Casi Connubii and the Development of Dogma," Archbishop Thomas D. Roberts et al., *Contraception and Holiness: The Catholic Predicament* (1964), pp. 237-239.
8. Quoted in Leo Pyle, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
9. Quoted by William Birmingham, *op. cit.* p. 77.
10. Quoted by Frank J. Ayd, Jr., "Pius XII's Statement on the Pill," *The Catholic Mind*, January 1965, p. 50.
11. *Loc. Cit.*
12. Quoted by William Birmingham, *op. cit.* p. 77.
13. Quoted in Leo Pyle, *op. cit.*, p. 196.
14. Quoted in Leo Pyle, *ibid.*, pp. 211-212.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
16. Quoted by Daniel Callahan, *Honesty in the Church*, 1965, pp. 85-86.
17. Cf. Anne Biezaneck, *op. cit.*, pp. 108, 109, 149, 152.
18. Quoted in Leo Pyle, *op. cit.* p. 93.
19. Daniel Callahan *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.

The Vatican and the Future

By F. A. RIDLEY

DURING this past decade, to be precise, ever since the accession of the late Pope John XXIII, a remarkable metamorphosis has overtaken the Roman Catholic Church and its Vatican leadership — "a papal revolution" as the late Pope himself termed it. For whereas in earlier ages, and very particularly since the Protestant Reformation, Rome prided herself upon her exclusiveness and took up a uniformly hostile attitude towards every other form of Christianity, today the emphasis is primarily laid upon unity; upon Christian reunion. And current papal policy seems to be consciously aiming at the eventual attainment of some kind of (to borrow a political metaphor) Christian united front under — it goes without saying! — the "infallible" leadership of the Papacy. The present tangled manoeuvres of the Vatican Council seem to envisage such a kind of eventual fulfilment.

What are the future perspectives that stem from this present startling *volte face* of the world-wide Church of Rome?

First of all, let us examine the origins of this present remarkable development. Unlikely as it may sound, it is actually true that, in a sense, the present papal revolution started in Birmingham! For that famous metropolis was not only the city of the Chamberlains, it also ranks among its most famous residents the most important Catholic thinker, John Henry Cardinal Newman, and it was precisely Cardinal Newman who, a century before Pope John,

laid down the determining theory of the papal revolution that is nowadays transforming the Vatican seemingly out of all recognition.

It was Newman who, very especially in *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, first established the then novel idea that the Christian Church contains within itself the seeds of new "development"; and it was an idea that transformed static Catholic theology to an evolving process.

The Pope, by virtue of his infallibility, has the power to add, subtract, modify, or even totally refashion the currently operative theory and practice of the Church. By virtue of its faculty of development, the Church must no longer be regarded as a stick-in-the-mud, hopelessly tied to its irrevocable past. For it now has the power previously denied it — to change with the times. Such were the epoch-making theories evolved by this great thinker in his monastic cell at Edgbaston who, as a former FREETHINKER editor Chapman Cohen used to say, is the last Christian thinker whom Freethinkers are compelled to take seriously as a foeman worthy of their steel. And do we not at present see precisely such a development in papal practice, such a reversal of bygone traditions as Newman had already forecast more than a century ago? I repeat, the present papal revolution at Rome had its origins in Birmingham.

What are the future perspectives? Rome today is not

changing her line because she likes to do so; she is changing it because she has to; even at Rome, circumstances are omniscient and evolution irresistible. For as the Jesuit expert on Christian reunion, Cardinal Bea, recently remarked to the Anglican Bishop of Woolwich (Dr. John Robinson of *Honest to God* fame): "the Counter-Reformation is over." Or to put it perhaps more realistically, that phase in the evolution of Catholicism which began at the Council of Trent as the "counter" to the Protestant Reformation has now exhausted its utility.

Protestantism is no longer the major enemy of Rome — outside Belfast at any rate. That position has now been taken up by atheism or, more precisely, by the scientific revolution of our era, which in the field of philosophy expresses itself as atheism — that is, by the exclusion of the supernatural from a universe autonomous and explicitly self-sufficient. It is against this world view — one infinitely more alien and dangerous than even the most iconoclastic forms of Protestantism ever were — that Rome is now regrouping her forces and seeking new allies even amongst her former enemies.

It is to reorientate its anti-Protestant front that the Vatican nowadays appears to be exactly following the advice traditionally given by one of its former missionaries, who used to advise his pagan converts to worship everything that they had previously burnt, and to burn everything they had previously worshipped.

It is with the express aim of jettisoning its earlier primarily anti-Protestant strategy and of evolving one aimed primarily at containing the forces of atheism and secularism, that Rome has now invoked Newman's theory and is developing it at a speed and towards ends that might well have astonished its original author.

It will now be clear what is the ultimate objective of the present papal revolution at Rome. For if it actually implies the end of the old — 16th century — Counter-Reformation, it equally implies the beginning of a new Counter-Reformation; the effective substitution of an anti-atheistic Counter-Reformation for its anti-Protestant predecessor. The Second Vatican Council is inaugurating the new one in much the same fashion as the Council of Trent inaugurated the old one. What are the current perspectives and the future prospects for this new Counter-Reformation that began in 1958 with the advent of Pope John?

Actually the prospects do not appear at all bright for the Vatican. Certainly Rome (as Lord Macaulay stressed in a famous passage) is an extremely resilient institution and one that has weathered many crises in the course of its 2,000 years of evolution. But the present crisis is qualitatively and not only quantitatively different. The scientific revolution which has transformed human society more completely within a single lifetime than it had been previously transformed since the days of the Pharaohs, would appear to spell the inevitable doom of the whole concept of the supernatural, and therewith of its most impressive embodiment in human history, the Roman Catholic Church. At present that Church is falling back on its "Maginot", its final line strategic defences, the united front of all the Churches and perhaps eventually of all the gods. Failing some such major retrogression of human civilisation such as followed the fall of Rome in the Dark Ages, the end would definitely appear to be in sight for the Vatican. For what we witness today is its final stand.

The third and final part of Georges Ory's article, *The Evidence for Jesus* has been held over until next week.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE NCCL

The statement in a recent issue to the effect that THE FREETHINKER is not the organ of the National Secular Society prompts me to write to you regretting the space devoted to the AGM of the National Council for Civil Liberties (11/6/65), the more so as you were good enough to publish a letter of mine a year or two ago criticising the association of the NSS with the Aldermaston march. You may say that as I am not a member of the NSS the activities of that body are no business of mine, but I would point out that my concern is with THE FREETHINKER, which I have read since 1924 and which I continue to take, not because at my age it can teach me anything, but to support the freethought point of view and for use as a propaganda medium.

In my opinion the propaganda value of THE FREETHINKER is much reduced by the association of the NSS with equivocal bodies such as CND and NCCL. It is, for instance, disturbing to find reported in the columns of THE FREETHINKER, apparently with approval, a statement to the effect that young people "may fight in national wars at 18, but not vote for or against them." When, may I ask, has the electorate ever had the opportunity of voting for or against a war? (Please note the indefinite article.) The statement is at best meaningless; at worst deliberately misleading.

Again, the last paragraph of the report states that "Through its affiliated bodies the NCCL now represents 3½ million people in Great Britain." "Through its affiliated bodies" means of course that the NCCL claims to represent people who in fact have probably never heard of it.

I suggest that THE FREETHINKER cannot afford space for statistics of this kind, which are as valueless as a trade-unionist's signature, or for coy lists of delegates which if more closely specified would look very odd indeed in a libertarian context.

W. E. NICHOLSON.

I read with amazement motions 1 and 2 from the National Secular Society for adoption by NCCL, mentioned by Mr. Tribe in THE FREETHINKER, June 11th: "This annual general meeting urges HM Government to remedy the following violations of individual and group freedoms entailed by the Establishment of the Church of England, viz.: (1) inability of the C of E to change its formularies and forms of service without approval by an external body, viz.: Parliament, which may be neither sympathetic nor interested; (2) appointment of higher Church dignitaries by the Queen acting on the advice of the Prime Minister, who may be of any or no religion and acting according to political considerations."

The NSS has always advocated the Disestablishment of the Church of England. This entails renunciation of the privileges accompanying establishment. A state church has no right to demand freedom from state interference; to grant this would be taking a liberty with the state and all other religious bodies. The Church of England was awarded power, privilege, lands, wealth and buildings by the state because it accepted jurisdiction from the state.

That a Church should have to bow to Parliament in matters of doctrine and rites and to a Monarch for permission to appoint a Church dignitary is, of course, ludicrous. But it is even more ludicrous that the NSS should espouse the sorrows of the State Church and enter the lists in support of its dignity and freedom. Should we not rather enjoy the spectacle of non-Conformists, Atheists and even (in one case) a Parsee, voting upon the desirability of this or that form of worship to impose upon their Reverent Lordships, the Bench of Bishops? Disestablish the Church, by all means, but while it clings to its privileges and emoluments, leave it open to the contempt of intelligent people.

EVA EBURY.

VATICAN IMPERIALISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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PRESENT attempts to bring about some sort of Christian union between Rome and Canterbury, have produced a whole spate of controversial literature, both Roman and Anglican which harks back to the English Reformation of the 16th century.

What did actually happen during that stormy but memorable era? Was the English Reformation in reality a genuine theological revolution like its Lutheran and Calvinist opposite numbers upon the European continent, or was it merely an administrative change as a result of which the English Church passed from papal to royal control?

In the light afforded by present-day efforts to undo in this 20th century the work of the English Reformation of the 16th, it may be desirable to find out precisely what the English Tudor Reformation intended to do, and what, in point of fact, it actually did.

The Political Reformation

The first, and historically most important distinction between the English Reformation and its European contemporary, was that it was started and led throughout all its successive vicissitudes by politicians, whereas on the continent it was professional theologians like Luther, Calvin and Zwingli who initially made the running. At Worms (1527) and Geneva (1536 *et seq*) Luther and Calvin led a theological revolution against the whole Roman system; a revolution which began by denying the divine right of the Papacy to govern, or even to exist at all. Nothing analogous to this ever took place in England, where Henry Tudor (Henry VIII, 1509-47) was, and remained to the end of his days, a devout Catholic. He firmly believed the whole medieval system of theology and whilst hanging Catholics wholesale as traitors, yet impartially burned Protestants alive as heretics, just as the Spanish Inquisition was doing on the continent, or as his own medieval predecessors had done in England.

What the men who originated the English Reformation initially aimed at, seems to have been merely the substitution of the royal authority in the Tudor state for the alien jurisdiction of the Papacy. When once the autocratic monarchy of the totalitarian Tudor state had made good its claim to supersede the alien jurisdiction of Rome as supreme head of the English Church, the Reformation had achieved its purpose from the point of view of the king and his ministers who had actually started it.

Defender of the Faith

For Henry, who had earned his title of Defender of the Roman!) Faith from the Pope as a reward for "refuting" Martin Luther, never appears to have had the least sympathy with the iconoclastic heresies of the continental reformers. As a learned Catholic historian of the English Reformation has observed, all that "the mighty Lord who broke the bounds of Rome" (Henry), really desired, was to become entirely independent of the Papacy: in short, to be his own (secular) pope, just as the Byzantine emperors of Constantinople had been, or as their imitators, the

Tsars of Russia were to be down to the end of the Russian Empire in 1917.

The Protestant Reformation: First Phase

While Henry VIII lived, there was no question of any specifically Protestant Reformation in England in any way analogous to the contemporary upheaval on the continent. The Catholic historian already cited (M. Louis Constant) gives Henry Tudor an explicit testimonial as regards his *bona fide* Catholic orthodoxy. Circumstances had made Henry anti-Roman but not anti-Catholic.

The Protestant Reformation came after the king's death. It came on two successive waves separated by nearly a century. The first wave broke immediately after Henry's death, under the titular reign of his son Edward VI, (1547-53) and under the real leadership of the young king's two successive Lord Protectors, the Dukes of Somerset and Northumberland, both Protestants in the continental revolutionary sense. For Somerset, perhaps the most farsighted statesman of the Tudor era, actually repealed the laws against heresy in accordance with the Reformation's cardinal teaching of "private judgment". He introduced religious toleration in England for the very first time, a revolutionary development that must surely have made Henry Tudor turn in his grave.

As it was, the ensuing Catholic counter-revolution under Mary, who succeeded Edward in 1553, had to convene a special parliament in order to reinstate the laws against heresy previously repealed by Somerset, before they could again get the fires of Smithfield blazing merrily with Protestant fuel. It should be noted in passing that neither the Roman nor the Spanish Inquisition ever had any jurisdiction in medieval (Catholic) England. All the laws against heresy were constitutionally enacted by English parliaments. The most important was the *De Haeretico Comburendo* (For the incineration of heretics) enacted in 1401 primarily against the Lollards by the fanatical ex-Teutonic Knight Henry IV (1399-1413). The Marian persecution proceeded under this statute.

The Protestant Reformation: Second Phase

The excesses of the Marian counter-revolution produced a corresponding reaction. This took the form of the Elizabethan compromise. Elizabeth Tudor (1558-1603), in essence restored the regime set up by her father, Henry VIII, a Byzantine Catholic Church orthodox in doctrine (though with some medieval accretions offensive to Renaissance scholarship removed) with a Catholic hierarchy of bishops but with the monarch substituted for the pope as the supreme head of the church as well as the state. Most important of all, Elizabeth did *not* repeal the laws against heresy, and heretics continued to be burned under her and her successor James I (1603-25)—the last in 1612.

However, militant Protestantism got another opportunity later in the century when, during the Civil War (1640-51), the Calvinist minority again seized power under the dynamic military leadership of Oliver Cromwell. For eleven years (1649-60) the Protestant Revolution con-

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The English Revolution

By F. A. RIDLEY

tinued, and England for the first time since Edward VI (or rather, of his Protectors) became a really Protestant country. And the Radical "Barebones Parliament" 1652-3, again repealed the laws against heresy exactly a century after Somerset had first done so.

However, reaction again triumphed, this time permanently. For since the Revolution of the Stuarts in 1660, England has retained the Tudor set-up of a Byzantine Catholic regime substantially unaltered.

Reunion with Rome?

In the light of the above summary outline, the following facts would appear to be relevant in particular reference to the present ecumenical movement towards reunion with

Rome. The English Reformation was never a genuinely Protestant one, except for two short periods of a few years under respectively the two Lord Protectors, Somerset and Cromwell.

The Church of England by Law Established, is not the result of any genuinely Protestant Reformation, but of a series of political compromises. In doctrine, in administration, and above all in basic mental outlook, it remains a Catholic, *not* a Protestant Church, but in the Byzantine not Roman tradition, with the unity of church and state.

I submit that these historical facts ought to be kept in mind in any current consideration involving Christian reunion between Rome and Canterbury.

Women in Society

By KIT MOUAT

THE National Council for Civil Liberties issued in May a most valuable and informative pamphlet *Women*, which is based on a study undertaken by Data Research Ltd. At 2s. 6d. no Secularist or Humanist should be without it. Education, employment, prospects, the professions, unequal pay, marriage and work and women's place in society are all dealt with concisely and readably. As the introduction points out, "The argument over women's rights has always been confused with the argument about women's role. But until these are regarded as completely separate issues, millions of people will continue to be second-class citizens".

Discrimination begins at school. "There is deliberately one standard for boys and another for girls . . .". Girls leave school earlier than boys, and only 25.4 per cent of women go to university; "in the general competition for university places girls have far less chance than boys". For a girl who has full qualifications and wants to be an engineer or a scientist, the outlook is bleak. There is no opportunity at all for those who want to be more than a clerk in the printing trade, to be a stockbroker, or, for that matter, a clergywoman. "The medical schools have not yet adopted the idea that admittance should be as a result of open competition with no regard to the sex of the applicant". Women go into offices and factories and then get married, very often to escape the dreary work involved. As regards pay, the slogan is "equal but different". The work for both sexes is equal; the difference lies in the pay packets. Even holidays were distributed unequally, it was found, "and in some firms it was reported that women had to work for eight years to earn the same holiday entitlement that men received after five years". Although the BBC gave equal pay to women in 1926, only half-a-dozen or so of its top jobs out of 150 are held by women. There has never been a woman judge in the High Court, nor a woman editor of a daily newspaper, and women journalists are still expected to concentrate their efforts on subjects that are of interest only to their own sex.

The pamphlet deals effectively with the traditional arguments against progress on the grounds that the "time is not yet ripe". And, of course, by encouraging and praising apathy in women and by suggesting that it is "unfeminine" to fight for one's rights, men succeed from generation to generation in preventing the "ripening" process. There are, however, "eight-and-a-half million women at work in Britain today. Seven million of them have not yet been granted equal economic rights. An enormous force, should they choose to make an immediate demand for equality".

Perhaps more than ever before we need another Secularist Annie Besant!

The pamphlet is called *Women*, and so inevitably the instances where men are the victims of discrimination are omitted. There are, however, some valid points that are not mentioned; for instance, a married woman cannot have a hysterectomy operation without signed permission from her husband, and even if a man and wife jointly own their house, it is most probably only the husband's name that will be marked for jury service. (When I remarked on this in my own district, I was greeted with, "surely you don't *want* to be on a jury?")

In common law (we read) "the husband and wife are one, and the husband is the one".

The laws regarding the guardianship of children are outrageous. In a happy marriage the wife and mother may submit with good humour to the indignity of her status, but I cannot imagine how the woman who has to beg for every shilling she needs, does not know her husband's income and has no rights over her children, can ever create a relationship of any value with her overlord. Perhaps there ought to be serious research into a possible link between the so-called female "frigidity" and the position of women in this country when they are not in bed. If women are too lazy, too lacking in confidence to fight their own battles, what excuse have men for not fighting them for us? Is it still only the Rights of *Man* that concern even the most progressive?

The Conclusion of the pamphlet sums up: "If a woman marries, she loses her legal rights as an individual; if she remains single, she loses her right to equal pay and opportunity as a working person. If she has legitimate children, she has no rights over them; if she has illegitimate children, she suffers both economically and socially".

In his foreword Martin Ennals (General Secretary of the NCCL) writes, "we hope that many of those who read *Women* will decide to join and give their support to our work". Well, he has persuaded me. His observation that "a revolutionary change in the attitude of mind among many men" is needed is certainly not an overstatement, and I am afraid that this applies to many Rationalist and Humanist men as well as to Christians.

Do get this excellent pamphlet and show it to your friends.

HANDBOOK OF CITIZENS' RIGHTS

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The Evidence for Jesus (3)

By GEORGES ORY

(Continued from page 204)

APART from the gospels which are later than is commonly pretended, reference to Jesus may be found in Gnosticism about AD 115-120, in Saturnius, or Saturninus, for whom Jesus is bodiless and unborn, not a man. For these Gnostics Jesus was a divine being, replacing in the Gnosis the Mother of the Living: the female divine element fading out before the male god Jesus.¹⁶

In Hermas's *Pastor*, Jesus is an archangel; and the *Didache* knows not a historic Jesus. The book of Revelation, the Apocalypse, composed somewhere about AD 100, revised later, certainly after 135, refers to a divine Jesus in several forms which are difficult to reconcile: the Celestial Messiah, the Lamb sacrificed at the end of the world, the heavenly High-Priest, the Child of the Bride of the Lamb and of Jahweh who escapes from the Dragon and rises to heaven. Here again Jesus is clearly no man.¹⁷

In the primitive text of the Pauline Epistles, the name Jesus plays a subsidiary part, being added to the title of Christ who was, for the apostle, a god of mystery, a redeemer, enemy of the Jewish Law, crucified cosmically by the Princes of this World, i.e. by Jahweh and by the planetary demons who hold souls in captivity.¹⁸ Similarly, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, composed c. 145, Jesus is the Heavenly High-Priest, "better than the angels", yet "a little lower than the angels", "in all things made like unto his brethren", yet he is no man, but the divine sacrificer. In the Gospel of Peter, without laying too much emphasis on apocrypha, the Christ is a giant loftier than the heavens who is identified with the heavenly Cross.

Marcion, writing about AD 140 in his *Evangelion* makes Jesus, the son of God, come down from heaven in the form of a grown man, but he is not a man; his body is ethereal, incorruptible; he is the Saviour Spirit, a phantom. For Justin, too, writing in 150, the god Jesus is ethereal and has taken on the shape of a man. We need not be surprised that later disciples should have been unable to grasp these subtle fancies and should have finished by looking on this Jesus as a man.

It would seem probable that this confusion was largely due to Marcion who was the first to imagine the terrestrial epiphany. With this we can perceive the germ of the metamorphosis of the god into the man. His disciples thought that the period which separated Marcion from his epiphany was a century; the well-known phrase "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius" (Luke 3, 1), that is in the year 28-29 suggests that a hundred had been subtracted from the date 128-9, the year when it was revealed to Marcion that the god had come down to earth.^{19 20} Then the date was taken by the disciples of John the Baptist as that of the manifestation of their master, and thus it appears in Luke. It was never claimed as marking the apparition of the man Jesus.

Jesus, fully grown, appears in the gospel of Mark, who knows nothing of his childhood. Next, Matthew and Luke invented genealogies for him; unfortunately they did not tell the same tale, so the two pedigrees are incompatible and fanciful. Celsus was unacquainted with these two genealogies going back to Abraham and Adam, but he knew one for Mary which he treats as a pompous yarn. Justin had met with one which was quite different from that in Luke or that in Matthew. Epiphanius (xxx, 13 . . .) declares that the Christians possessed no information as to the youth of Jesus.²¹

About the year 177—or perhaps earlier if he wrote the *Diatessaron*—Tatian brought order into the gospels, but he did know of the two chapters in Luke concerning the birth of Jesus. According to O. Cullmann (*Christol. du N.T.*, p. 111) there were already in certain rabbinical circles full genealogies of the awaited Messiah.

Fancy filled in the blanks left by ignorance: Son of God, Son of the Holy Ghost, Jesus became the Son of Joseph and, hence, Messiah and Son of David. As these additions were inserted into the gospels, the Greek-speaking Christians wanted to know what they meant; so John 1, 41 explained "the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" although in verse 36 "he saith, Behold the Lamb of God". Mark apparently did not like this, 8, 29-30, "Peter saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. And he charged them that they should tell no man of him". Nor again did Mark approve of the descent from David, 12, 35-39 any more than did Matthew 22, 43-45.

Contemporaries knew that the House of David was extinct; the later prophets, viz. Ezekiel, 2nd Isaiah, and Malachi had no knowledge of the Davidic origin of the Messiah.

Matthew 2, 1; Luke 1, 5 and Mark 6, 14 all tell us that Jesus was born in the days of Herod the King. Similarly the gospel of the Ebionites places the activity of John the Baptist in the time of Herod, King of Judaea. It is not therefore a question of Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea from 4 BC-AD 39. But which Herod? For there were two: Herod the Great who reigned from 40 BC-4 BC; and Herod Agrippa the First who reigned c. AD 37-43. Luke 3 places the baptism and death of Jesus in the reign of Tiberius, i.e. between AD 14 and 37. Was this Tiberius the Emperor or the Procurator Tiberius Alexander who ruled at Jerusalem from 45-48 under the Emperor Claudius, who expelled the Jews who followed Chrestos from Rome in 49? This latter Tiberius put to death in 47 James and Simon, the son of Judas the Galilean. Luke clearly states Tiberius the Emperor, but confusion is not out of the question. Tertullian (*Apol.* ix) refers to one Tiberius, pro-consul of Africa. Luke declares that Jesus's birth took place during a census, which occurred in the year 6, and that Christ was thirty years old in 29. John states that Jesus was not fifty years old when he died, so that Jesus must have been born about 22-15 BC. Eusebius made out that, by a false report from Pilate Jesus was put to death in AD 21, which did not seem likely. The early Christians, wishful to fix the date of the birth of their Lord, wavered between January 6th, March 28th, April 18th or 19th, May 29th and December 25th. Ignatius (so-called Bishop of Antioch, but really a Christian of Philippi) wrote about AD 150 or later that the birth and death of the Christ was unknown to Satan, who was thus less well informed than the Evangelists, and people objected to him, that what they could not find in the records they could not believe. It is comforting to think that the critics of today had their forerunners in the second century.

If Pilate had really condemned Jesus, he would have reported the case to the Emperor. As no one had ever heard of this report, the faithful invented one; and the pagans another one. The gospels teach us nothing of factual value; they are evidence of the beliefs held between

(Concluded on page 222)

This Believing World

SHOCKED listeners to the BBC radio will be wondering what has happened to the religious directors there. On June 20th, the *Observer* headed a report, "Atheist to put their case in six BBC talks". This is enough to cause revolution in all Christian circles. It is one thing to publish a few pamphlets and books advocating atheism, but quite another to tell millions of listeners that there is no evidence whatever for the existence of God. The curious thing in the report is however the absence of any mention of atheism. Professor A. J. Ayer, the new President of the British Humanist Association, is to take part in the talks, and it will be interesting to see if he is allowed to proclaim his own unbelief in religion as "atheism". We ourselves would like to see *all* points of views clearly expressed—but above all, to allow an Atheist to describe himself as such without equivocation.

★
THE SAME journal reported that the Archbishop of York, Dr. Donald Coggan, at the Liverpool Diocesan Conference, had made no bones about his dissatisfaction with "TV religion", which he called "a tragedy". What Dr. Coggan wants is for modern speakers to hold fast to the religion of Jesus as expressed 1,900 years ago. He told his hearers that he himself belonged "to the Catholic Church of this country" which was also "the Reformed Church". And, he said, "we do not need to ape the Roman Catholics or the non-Anglicans", although "we can learn from both". Why incidentally does not the BBC arrange a full scale debate between Professor Ayer, and the Archbishop of York? Or would one with Cardinal Heenan draw a bigger audience?

★
THERE is one other point about religion in England which badly needs clearing up. Now that thousands of African and Asiatic students are studying in our universities—where do they exactly stand with regard to Christianity? Do they come to accept Jesus as their saviour? And, fresh from a science course, do they believe now in miracles, in the Virgin Birth, and in the Resurrection, as fervently as our Archbishops? Selected coloured students, it is true, on radio and TV, most piously express their belief in every thing Christianity stands for, but the mass of them, are they really believers?

★
A DOUBLE page spread of the *Daily Sketch* (21/6/65), headed an article, "Do You Believe in Miracles?", and there is no doubt that hundreds of Christians would answer with a shout, "We do!" But the particular miracle described is, we need hardly say, the cure of a crippled woman at Lourdes who, at one time, "lost her faith", and now, as in millions of similar cases, is thoroughly convinced that God himself has cured her.

★
TO MAKE it even more convincing, the Roman Catholic Church admits that the Lord had intervened in her favour. And this should settle the question, once and for all. As far as we can judge from the account, it all looks suspiciously like many similar "cures" at Lourdes, and anybody who believes in those will believe anything. Needless to add, there is very little chance of investigating this cure, any more than there is of investigating the thousands of cures by Spiritualist healers in this country. But what does this matter to the *Daily Sketch*.

SPECIAL OFFER to readers of this paper. The Autobiography of Major Christopher Draper, DSC., entitled *The Mad Major*. First published in 1962 at 25/-. A limited number offered at 10/- post paid. 230 pages fully illustrated and autographed from C. Draper, 2 Conway Street, London, W.1.

Secularists and the Past

In his letter, THE FREETHINKER (4/6/65) Mr. Shepherd among other things complains that we Secularists overstress the repressive role played by the Church in the past. He refers to Slavery, the Wars of Religion and the mental blight that settled over Europe with the coming of Christianity. If Mr. Shepherd will read a manual of "Christian Evidence" he will be informed that all that is best in our world such as it is, was brought about by the benign influence of Christianity. Most Christians swallow this stuff hook, line and sinker and consequently their religious guides get away with it. We Secularists expose these statements for what they are — lies. We do our best to enlighten the dupes who are easy prey for the army of clerics who fasten on the infant mind as soon as possible.

How flimsy are these claims Mr. Shepherd will see if he can obtain Lecky's *Rationalism in Europe* or McCabe's *Social Record of Christianity and Testament of Christian Civilization*, or Chapman Cohen's *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*. With these at his elbow Mr. Shepherd will have no difficulty in seeing why we Secularists can never cease exposing the hollow claims so often put forward from Christian pulpits. The goodness of individual Christians does not alter the case against the repressive influence of the Church as a whole.

May I wish Mr. Shepherd good luck in his Sunday Freedom League campaign.

E. MARKLEY.

Well! Well! My recent letter to THE FREETHINKER seems to have brought down a hornet's nest upon my enquiring head, albeit I explained, I thought quite clearly, I am a new boy to organised Secularism, and sought the help of readers for information and "ammunition" when arguing against Christian people, when, whom! my name is brought up in front page news! I asked for assistance to illustrate to opponents, just what Secularism has recently done, and is doing today, for all human society, as distinct from what seems to me, a constant adulatory repetition of the works of Charles Bradlaugh, François Voltaire and Thomas Paine of the 17- and 18-hundreds (a smattering of each of which I read, mostly in public libraries in London 40 years ago, and I remember thinking then, rather outdated) and of Secularism's part in the abolition of slavery against religious opposition, which is also history now, which has been harped upon, year in and out—dare I say it, almost ad nauseum!

And what do I get? Just this, all over again! Charles Bradlaugh's 1880 pamphlet on atheism (which Colin McCall admits is not read today — I probably read it in my twenties, and may even read it again, when I retire and have time) which to my mind is — or was, rather — a lot of hair-splitting on the question of the existence, or non-existence, of God. If, as Colin McCall says, one does not deny God, then this admits the possibility of God's existence, and this is Agnosticism. The atheist says: There is no God (a=not, theos=God) or have I quoted Greek, or the Oxford Dictionary wrongly? Every Atheist who has spoken to me says "There is no God." I think I'll stick to Agnosticism — a man is as big a fool, etc.

But away with all this — put the past behind us — goodness knows, we accuse the world of Religion, of living and dreaming in the dim past of the Old and New Testaments — especially the Roman Catholics — away with past Secular glories, and let us boast of today's achievements — can we?

I firmly believe, and can Colin McCall, or anyone else, deny me, that the work I am doing now, against the religious dictatorship of the Lord's Day Observance Society, is Secularism fighting Religion, in 1965, and will, and is, benefiting the community now. Thank you again, Mr. Editor, for all you've done for our cause.

JOHN SHEPHERD.

The Sunday Freedom League.

P.S.—May I plead for yet more names, more letters, please?

[Personally—and Mr. Peters notwithstanding (25/6/65)—we think that Mr. Shepherd overestimates the influence of the LDOS. Is it really worth taking seriously in 1965?—ED.]

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill), Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY. Every Friday, 8 p.m.: L. EBURY and J. A. MILLAR.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, July 11th, 6.45 p.m.: A meeting.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, July 11th, 11 a.m.: Professor T. H. PEAR, "The Social Status of the Social Psychologist"

Notes and News

THIS YEAR marks the seven-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Dante Alighieri, and it is expected that the great anti-papal poet will be honoured by a papal encyclical. The Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* is to publish a 32-page supplement dedicated to Dante, and it recently carried an article which, George Armstrong reported (*The Guardian*, 18/6/65), fitted the poet's medieval philosophy to the problems now being discussed in the ecumenical council". As for Dante's "allegedly negative views of the Church", nothing had ever been "more distorted or twisted". The Pope's encyclical was expected to define the Florentine supporter of the anti-papal Ghibelline Party, who condemned three popes to his Inferno, as "the greatest Christian poet of all time". Yet Dante's *De Monarchia*, advocated a universal monarchy in which all temporal power would be vested and which would exercise its authority independently of, but alongside the pope. This, as Mr. Armstrong wryly remarked, earned the poet his place on the Index, "where he stayed until the beginning of this century".

★

IT HAS come to the notice of the Rev. John R. Williams, vicar of St. Stephen's, Selly Hull, Birmingham and the Rev. Keith Mawdsley, minister of Selly Park Baptist Church, that many people in their area had been "troubled (and even pestered) from time to time by Jehovah's Witnesses". The clergymen were at pains to point out, in a May newsletter to their flocks that this group does not hold "orthodox belief about Jesus Christ as is held by all the major denominations, e.g. Anglicans, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, etc". The Witnesses—the newsletter continued—"deny the full divinity of Christ, are basically Unitarian in outlook and

cannot be called Christians (nor would wish to be so called)". But they appeal to the Bible. In fact, the clergymen said, the views of Jehovah's Witnesses are similar to the heretic Arius, condemned by the Christian Church in AD 325.

★

A LETTER to the *Observer* (20/6/65) from Dr. Levi Dawson, protested that every time the paper wanted the Christian point of view expressed in its columns, it "found it necessary to call on the Bishop of Woolwich". There are, Dr. Dawson said, "many of us in the Christian Church who do not feel that the Bishop represents more than a very small minority in the Church today". No doubt, but what orthodox Christian writer has the popular appeal of Dr. Robinson?

★

THE SAME issue of the *Observer* reported the series of six BBC programmes in the autumn in which "leading atheists" of the British Humanist Association will be interviewed on the Home Service. And the new BHA President, Professor A. J. Ayer, told the paper's reporter, Ivan Yates, that it was hoped to convert people. The Professor thought that the case against religion should be stated publicly. But he didn't want to see "the sort of puerile attacks on the churches which were all too common 30 years ago". He conjectured that the majority of people today were "deists in a very vague way".

★

HUMANISTS were well organised and active at Oxford, Professor Ayer said, and religion "very little entrenched there". He wouldn't want to abolish the college chapels though, if he were involved in the founding of a new college, "I think I would support Professor Crick", who had opposed the building of a chapel at Churchill College, Cambridge. "I don't want to match religious intolerance with humanist intolerance", Professor Ayer added. "And I'd like to get away from the vegetarian and sandals, Welwyn Garden City sort of image and recruit more writers and get humanism to have more appeal to the young and to universities". The programmes will start on October 9th, and the interviewer is expected to be Mr. Erskine Childers.

★

A BAPTIST convention at London, Ontario, was told on June 19th that unrest in Quebec might result in the Province's seceding from the Christian Church. E. M. Jenkins, interim general secretary, feared that French Canada could be lost as a province and from Christianity. And M. H. Racicot of Ottawa added that the Roman Catholic clergy in Quebec was losing control and domination over the public. The "Quebec revolution" had touched religion, Mr. Racicot said, and was "asking embarrassing questions" (*Montreal Gazette*, 10/6/65). This had prompted a priest to remark that one-third of the students at French Canadian Catholic universities were atheists. Mr. Racicot did not name the priest and said he did not agree with the statement.

★

HERE is a footnote to last week's issue featuring Roman Catholics and the Pill. It was reported by the British United Press from Denver, Colorado, on June 30th, that Donald Aishman, a college student, had obtained an annulment of his marriage on the grounds that his wife went back on her word and refused to use birth control pills. The Denver District Judge granted the annulment on grounds of false representation, Aishman claiming that before their marriage on March 24th, his wife, a Roman Catholic, had agreed to use the pill until he had completed his college education.

The Evidence for Jesus (3)

(Continued from page 219)

the years 150 and 200, determining certain aspects of religion at this period. St. Augustine wrote that only on the authority of the Church could he believe the gospels (*Contra. Epist. Fund.*).

To find material for their biography of Jesus the scribes sought fresh detail, particularly from the Jewish Bible, which they had not found before, and fabricated a "mosaic", a cento, with a multitude of scraps picked out from all sorts of places, careless of whether the scrap fitted in with probability or with the original sense of the context, provided that it could be made to build up the required picture. In the 17th and 18th Psalms and in *Esdra*s and in *Baruch* the messianic king liberates Israel and holds the gentile under his yoke, whereas Jesus was overcome by the Princes and Powers of this world and his Kingdom was elsewhere and to come. It is one of History's little ironies to have awarded to Jesus the title of Messiah which he did not deserve and to have applied to him prophecies which he never fulfilled.

Matthew and Luke chose Bethlehem as Jesus's birth-place as it was in David's country; and he was born in a stable in a cave, because a grotto was a proper place for a god to be born in (e.g. Tammuz, Adonis, Mithras, Dionysus, Hermes, Horus and Zeus). Bethlehem was preferred to Nazareth for those who could not accept so pagan a region as Galilee as suitable for their god's nativity (John 1, 46; 7, 52, "out of Galilee ariseth no prophet"). Matthew thought that Jesus was brought to Nazareth to fulfil a prophecy so that Jesus might be called the Nazarene. As, however, there is no prophecy which speaks of Nazareth, one can only imagine that the evangelists finding the title Nazarene (consecrated to the Lord) in the Jewish Bible, thought that it must refer to a town; as this did not exist, they invented it. It looks as if Nazareth has replaced Capernaum, the hamlet of the Consoler, which was for Mark the home of Jesus; but this name may be nothing more than a Gnostic symbol.

The orthodox opinion is that Jesus lived with his disciples for three years. Some critics reduce his prophetic career to a single year. Whether three years or one, this is a very short time in which to found a religion and to give it a sound foundation. However it may be, during this brief period Jesus must have spoken, written and acted, and all that he did must, we suppose, have been important to his disciples so that they would have preserved some exact and lasting record of all this. Not so. The gospels devote only a third to a fifth of their text to the doings of Jesus; and their reports relate to only eight days. All that is given of the rest is a few scenes of theological significance.

So, of that celebrated life which is said to have lasted thirty years, all that we are told is a story of eight days and a mythological pedigree; which is not very convincing, particularly when criticism reveals that the story of the Passion was in the first place a narrative with a special meaning. This uncertainty on the part of Christian writers as to the life of Jesus is met with later; for in 180 Irenaeus speaks of Christ going up to heaven before his crucifixion.

Hence for a century to a century and a half after Herod and Pilate, Jesus was not looked on as a real man, but, under various forms, as a divine person. If, from the very beginning he had been a man, he would scarcely have been the Lamb or the Divine Child. If his disciples and adepts had, as is pretended, worshipped a mortal man,

they would not have shown for a century and a half a complete indifference to his biographical detail. If, on the other hand, he was in his origin a God sacrificed from the foundation of the world, being crucified by the "powers and principalities of this world", he could not as a man be crucified by the Romans.

The earliest known texts of St. Mark do not mention the Resurrection; the early Christians probably did not believe in the bodily resurrection, only in the survival of the spirit and its return to heaven after the destruction of the body. When the people no longer understood the mystery of the god who died and was born again, they were told the story of the man crucified by the Romans.

The mystic cross existed long before Christianity and became associated and confused with the Roman instrument of punishment. That evangelists could regard it as a symbol is apparent in Luke 9, 23; Mark 8, 34; Matt. 16, 24; "If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me". This did not mean that they would all be crucified; the cross here is the divine symbol of victory, the cross of light and not of death. It was thus that the early Christians considered the Cross. The Rev. P. Daniélou agrees: "if the sign of the cross today evokes a gibbet on which the Christ is nailed, that is not its first meaning; the sign of the cross marked on the brow represented for the early Christians the name of their Lord, The Word, and meant that they had been consecrated . . . the sign of the cross was made originally not in allusion to Christ's Passion, but as a mark of divine glory . . . the four arms of the cross are a symbol of the cosmic quality of this act of salvation". This admission is simply the statement of an undeniable fact witnessed by numerous and ancient Christian texts. In the same review as this article by P. Daniélou (*La Table Ronde*, Dec. 1957), M. Adolphe Dupront, professor at the Sorbonne, wrote, "It is certain that the cross of the Passion is that of our modern laments; in the early times the cross was above all the cross of glory; the infamy of the crucifixion is a later development because customary [i.e. the cross was a customary form of execution] or by masochism".

The stories of the Passion are full of impossibilities and contradictions;²² they abound in borrowings from ritual and from antique legends, and mirror a primitive mentality. The early Christians were so well aware that the drama of the Passion and of Salvation were placed in heaven that they did not bother to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to pray over the tomb of one Jesus; for it is only after 338-347 that the legend of the Holy Places was created and that the "true cross" was found between those of two robbers. It was not until 692 at the Council of Constantinople that the Church was to decide that the Cross was no longer allegorical but real—and of what reality? One drawn from the fancies of believing crowds establishing a "spiritual truth" which could find no support in history.²³

There would seem to be then, strong reasons for regarding the man Jesus as an artificial creation; born no one knows how or when or where; at one and the same time prophet, messiah, king, high-priest, miracle-worker, and yet helpless in the face of force: adulated and yet abandoned by the mob, accompanied by symbolic personages, e.g. the prosecuting king, the evil high-priest, the wicked Roman, the traitor Jew, etc. In the bright light of criticism he fades and vanishes; like the ghost of Hamlet's

father he becomes visible only in the darkness of faith. The creation of the Holy Ghost is the ghostly fancy of men; in the Paradise of fairy-tales he is the elder brother of William Tell.

Confronting this vague simulacrum of a man who in his wanderings through Galilee picks up his companions, preaches and gathers crowds about him, is the god that works wonders, resurrects after a descent into death and then ascends to heaven. These two personages are not and cannot be the same, though the gospels vouch for their unity. We ask ourselves what can have taken place in the minds of those mystics who dreamed that they lived in the beginnings of this religion or held that it had been revealed to them in their ecstasies, their visions and their reveries.²⁴

Gods are the creation of man, and Jesus was a god "from the beginning"; he precedes human history and is an object of worship. Only a god can understand and compile the history of gods. Christ's history is like that of other gods, perceptible in fragments only; and it is easy to observe that, like many another oriental god who came before him or was his contemporary, he was a god of mystery, of gnosis, of magic. He displays many aspects recalling the syncretism of the gnosis, which adapts itself to most varying religious systems. The names, the forms may change, but the essence remains the same. This god no matter whether he be the god of Simon Magus, or of the Naassenes or of Saturninus or of other sects, whether he is called Jesus or known by some other name, whether he be incarnated or not, comes down from heaven to save the believers. At first an immaterial spirit, he or it takes on the shape of man; then is born of a virgin miraculously; then a human father is found for him and a pedigree; finally a birthplace and a birthday. Thus we can follow its progress through the Christian texts. This passage from IT to HE is a commonplace in the history of religions, and the Christian legend displays little originality. Many of the biblical persons are derived from deities; among the most recently recognised are Esther and Merodach (Merodach) the ancient Ishtar and Marduk.

Marcel Granet in his *Religion des Chinois* reminds us of an old Chinese myth: Ho-Tsi was born by the power of Heaven which breathed into his mother a breath of the celestial spirit. Ho-Tsi was therefore entitled to be joined for worship with the Celestial Sovereign and to be the mediator of his people with the Supreme Power. Nevertheless it was repeatedly declared that this Son of Heaven was also a Son of Man. This would have been scandalous if Kiang-Yuan, the Virgin Mother of the god Ho-Tsi, had no husband. Thus Ho-Tsi had a father Ti-Ko in the manner of men. Tradition reports that Ti-Ko made some difficulties before he bowed to the holy miracle. He yielded, however, and was rewarded by becoming the patron of conjugal life.

In Greek legend, Zeus himself came down to earth and by him Alcmena conceived Hercules, the messiah who put an end to the age of iron and brought in the age of gold. Like Ti-Ko and Joseph, Amphitryon, husband of Alcmena, yielded to the god, and the prophet Tiresias addressed Alcmena in these terms: "Rejoice, thou who has brought forth the most valiant of sons . . . thou shalt be worshipped by the people of Argos". Even as, later, "He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest . . . and all the generations shall call me (Mary) blessed".

Ulysses, Romulus, Alexander, Solon, Pythagoras, Plato were all, so the stories go, of extraordinary birth. That of Plato was certainly impressive; according to Diogenes Laertius, Plato's father Ariston was told in a dream of his birth and at Apollo's command postponed his union with

his wife Perictiona and did not go to her until she was brought to bed. Just as Joseph, according to Matthew, 1, 24-25, "took unto him his wife and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son". Origen thought that the story of Plato's birth was a myth such as was told to explain the wisdom of great men.

Two thousand years ago the mass of the Greeks believed in the union of a god with a mortal as exemplified in the births of Hercules, Perseus, Aeacus, Minos, Hermes, Helen, Dardanus, Tantalus, and many more of whose existence there was no doubt nor of their lives on earth. Today these legends are no longer believed; they have been replaced by the legend of Jesus.²⁵

It is not enough to have shown that Jesus was a god made into a man: we will try to make clear how this was done. First of all, we note that this biography of Jesus is fabricated from a mass of selected biblical items, arranged and interpreted most often in a glaring manner. Next we observe that²⁶ much of this biographical material has already served for John the Baptist and has been transferred to Jesus.²⁷ Lastly, and we emphasise this, there existed other Jesuses of whom use was made in manufacturing the Jesus of the gospels. Jesus was a not uncommon name and several who bore it took prominent parts in an agitated political and religious period. In Hebrew history written in Greek are to be found references to forty-one of this name.²⁸ Some of these played an active part just before the war of 66-70. All were Jews; none can be considered to be the Jesus of the gospels, though scraps of their records are to be met with in the New Testament.

It is affirmed with truth that Flavius Josephus did not know of Jesus Christ; but it is sometimes overlooked that he was acquainted with several of the name of Jesus. He refers to (*Ant* xx) Jesus the son of Damnaeus and to Jesus the son of Gamaliel, who, before the rebellion of 62-63 were both high-priests and took part in the fighting, recruiting supporters from the mob. He also knew a Jesus high-priest contemporary of a Lazarus; and had an enemy Jesus, the son of Sapphias, who was an adventurer (*Vita*, lxvi) leader of the fishermen of the Lake of Tiberias and of the poor; and this last Jesus was confused seemingly with a Jesus, son of Tupa (or of Saphatos), who won a brief if brilliant success against the Romans (*War*, iii, 450).

Another Jesus met in Josephus (*Vita*, 105) was chief of a brigand band of 800 men in the neighbourhood of Ptolemais who was at first hostile to Josephus and later his ally. Again there was a Galilean Jesus, chief of 600 armed men holding a veritable fastness in Jerusalem itself; and yet another, the son of Ananos, who foretold for seven years the ruin of Jerusalem and of the Temple and who was slain in the course of the siege. We could add to the list.²⁹

It would seem incontestable that, in view of the name common to them all and of their mention in the same work of Josephus, all these persons called Jesus who lived at the same period should have contributed to the creation of a fabulous personality fitted to the god when he was made man.

16. See *Cahier Renan*, no. 12, *Le Mythe Samaritan d' Hélène*. The *Clementine Epistles* were directed against this female supremacy. Certain gnostic sects before Christianity, e.g., the Naassenes or, before the gospels, e.g., the Nicolaites, worshipped a female Holy Ghost who was the Mother of God and of the Living; derived directly from the Asiatic Magna Mater, who was also mediterranean. She was interpreted mystically as the Church Spouse of Christ. The Virgin Mary, replica of the goddess of fertility, is not a historic person. The Madonna existed several centuries BC and statuettes of Isis figured the Virgin and the Child. Mary was easily given the ancient functions of goddess of springs and of trees, and her churches were erected on the sites of ancient pagan temples. Justin complained that the Greeks

raised near springs temples to a pagan virgin whom they called Kore.

17. The visionary of Revelation tells us in ch. 20 that an angel "laid hold of the dragon, that old serpent . . . and bound him for a thousand years".

18. Revelation and parts of the Epistles are composed in rhythmic strophes, and are liturgical, not historical.

19. Jesus is the name of the divine Christ transformed into man. (Justin, *Apol.* ii, 6). Similarly Krishna is the name of the re-incarnated Vishnu. The Ascension of Jesus and the Assumption of the Virgin are in the proper order of their divine natures; they had to return to that heaven from which they had descended.

20. See Couchoud, *Jesus le dieu fait homme*, p. 162 and note 2; *The Creation of Christ*, vol. 2.

21. Mahomet knew only of the virgin birth.

22. See *Jesus a-t-il été crucifié?* *Cahiers Ernest Renan*, nos 6, 7 and 8.

23. Writing about the year 200, Clement of Alexandria makes no mention of the cross among Christian symbols though he gives the boat, the fish, the anchor, the harp, and the dove. The Latin cross did not appear in the catacombs until about 450; even then it was evidently symbolic and decorated with flowers. The famous "labarum" of Constantine (312) was not a Christian cross, but the imperial Cross of the Victorious Sun, not that of the Crucified Son. It was not until the 6th or 7th century that the crucifix is met with. It was only in the 4th century that the child Jesus is shown in the catacombs with his parents, and the ox and the ass.

24. For the Rev. Father de Grandmaison "the union in a single person which pre-existed . . . of two natures—the divine and the human—is a mystery which is beyond the understanding of man; there is therefore no question of justifying the doctrine of the Incarnation, of demonstrating by intrinsic reasons that it is the sole veritable doctrine". The Dogma is received from the Christian Church Catholic which is the depository and interpreter of Christ's authentic teaching (op. cit. p. 211). It is evident that the argument from authority is the only one that can solve the problem.

25. This belief in incarnation was common to many religions, particularly in India. There is also an Egyptian inscription in which the god Ammon says to Rameses or Sesostri: "I am thy father; I engendered thee as a god; all thy members are divine; I produced thee, possessing thy august mother".

26. v. *Bulletin Renan* no. 34; P. Alfarié counted 240 borrowings from the Jewish Bible.

27. *Cahier Renan* no. 10 "John the Baptist".

28. "Inventaire de quarante-et-un porteurs du nom de Jesus dans l'histoire juive écrite en grec" W-L Dulière, *Novum Testamentum*, vol. iii, fasc. 3, 1959.

29. There were two more Jesus high-priests in the days of Herod and Archelaus; one of the son of Phabi c. 27 BC and the second son of Siah in 4 BC. A passage in *Matthew* 23, 31-36 refers to the period of the Jewish war, in which a pretended prophecy, evidently thought of after the event, makes Jesus accuse the Scribes and Pharisees "ye are the children of them which killed the prophets . . . some of them ye shall kill and crucify . . . that upon you shall come all the righteous blood shed upon all the earth from the blood of the righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar". These Jewish martyrs were those of Hanan the high priest in AD 62 and this Zacharias is mentioned by Josephus (*War* iv, v. 4) as assassinated by the Zealots during the siege of Jerusalem (AD 67 or 68). This passage is clearly later than AD 70, although attempts have been made to consider it as referring to an earlier Zacharias. Jesus's prophecy of the fall of the Temple (*Matt* 24, 29) was not known to Paul, to the Fourth Evangelist, to Justin, to Athenagoras or to Theophilus of Antioch. According to W-L Dulière, in his paper to the congress on the History of Religions at Marburg, 1960, this prophecy was inserted into the Synoptics and refers to Jesus the son of Ananos (Josephus, *War*, vi, 300-314) who was taken before the governor Albinus who released him. If so, there was a confusion between the Jesuses. Eighty years ago, Georges Solomon (*The Jesus of History and the Jesus of Tradition Identified*, Reeves and Turner, 1880) suggested that the Jesus who announced the fall of Jerusalem and the Galilean Jesus, son of Sapphias, who was associated with Simon and John, had been treated as one and the same person in the gospels.

[With the above we end our three-part extract from *An Analysis of Christian Origins* by Georges Ory, President of the Cercle Ernest Renan, Paris. The complete 60-page pamphlet, translated from the French by C. Bradlaugh Bonner, is available from THE FREETHINKER Bookshop for 2s. 6d., plus 4d. postage.]

CORRESPONDENCE

JUGGLING WITH "GOD"

Critical readers of Bishop Robinson's books *Honest to God* and *The "Honest to God" Debate* will readily agree with Mr. Ridley's prognosis that the only strategy of future theologians will necessarily be that of "juggling with 'God'" (March 26th).

Dr. Robinson is a perfect exponent of this. While in *Honest to God* he unctuously "purges out the dead myth" (p.133) of "God as a person living in heaven, a God who is distinguished by the fact that 'There is no god beside me.'" (p.32)—and the last quotation plainly reveals that he was dismissing the West Semitic god Yahweh who said it and who was notably the god and father of Jesus—in *The "Honest to God" Debate*, the Bishop completely renegades and reaffirms the same myth (p.262). He says: "The only God who meets my need is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob", the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .—in short, the same god Yahweh of Israel.

This sample of juggling with "God" does not appear to me as either ingenious or amusing. It is rather very, very plain double-talk. No wonder, Dr. Robinson has been so quickly found out by his fellows—genuinely honest to God Christians.

GREGORY S. SMELTERS, (Australia).

THE AGE OF UNREASON

The efforts of Mr. Goodman to show the astrological basis of Christianity are welcome. It has always surprised me that the pioneer work of Robert Taylor in this field has been so little recognised. Many Secularists have pointed out the similarities between Christianity and earlier religions; but few have traced the stories to their origin: men's observations of the stars and planets and the stories they invented to account for, or dramatise, the movements of those bodies.

HENRY MEULEN.

CHRISTIAN MORALITY

I have so much admired Gillian Hawtin's trenchant writing, that I was perturbed to see in *THE FREETHINKER*, (June 18th) that she, too, is echoing the Reverent Humanist scare "Not to empty the baby out with the bathwater": the baby being Christian morality and the bathwater Christian theology.

To say the least, the analogy is stupid, and it illbecomes a militant Freethinker to regret the passing of Christian morality. That "baby" is a monstrosity, conceived by superstition out of fear and fostered by priestcraft. The sooner it is emptied away with the bath of Emmanuel's blood, the better. The best thing that can be said of humanity is that that "baby" has always been an unwanted child. Human love and sympathy has turned its back on that creature throughout the centuries; people are better than their creed. Some there have been who have welcomed it, saints, hermits, inquisitors, witch-hunters, floggers, flagellants, warmongers, all beloved of the Church which nourishes your "babe".

When that horrid child has gone, perhaps we can set about nourishing the neglected child or reason, mutual aid, enlightened self-interest, who, despite all the fires on this earth, and threats of damnation in the world to come, has survived, because it is a child of nature not theology.

EVA EBURY.

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HERE'S NEWS!—as our lowbrow papers would describe it. For we read recently in a leftish journal in this country (*The Newsletter*, organ of the Socialist Labour League) the following interesting item: "Number 18 of the Soviet bibliographical bulletin, *Novi Knigi* (New Books), announced the publication in the Soviet Union of a Russian translation of the book, *L'Apparition de l'Homme*, a work by the Reverend Teilhard de Chardin, a member of the Society of Jesus, who died in 1955".

The *Newsletter* goes on to inform us that, the book, "which is to be sold at the low price of 96 kopeks, will be prefaced by an introduction by Roger Garaud, a member of the political bureau of the French Communist Party". We learn further that Garaud, who has for some time been extolling collaboration between Catholics and Communists, was invited a few weeks ago to address a conference at the Catholic university at Louvain in Belgium, and of course accepted.

After a debate on the subject of materialism and humanism which took place in Geneva on April 9th, 1965, Garaud stated that "Marxism would be impoverished if St. Augustine or St. John of the Cross were to become foreign to it". Upon which *Newsletter* aptly comments: "One can guess the manner in which he will present the philosophy of the Reverend Fr. Teilhard de Chardin to the Soviet public".

Having proceeded to point out that it is still impossible to publish in the Soviet Union even the works of opposition Communists of the intellectual calibre of Trotsky and Bukharin (both of whom fell foul of Stalin), the paper adds this pungent comment: "But they do publish a work by a Jesuit priest, they spread the ideas of a representative of religious thought, a member of a Catholic organisation which has been since its creation one of the most formidable instruments of the Papacy against all movements of emancipation whether spiritual or material" (italics in original).

The Opium of the People

Time was—in 1917 and the years immediately following—when Russian Communism (including the Communism exported by the Third International) was definitely atheistic and avowedly anti-religious. In his Marxist classic, *Materialism and Empirio Criticism* originally written in the Reading Room of the British Museum where Marx had also written *Das Capital*, Lenin fiercely inveighed against the supernatural, expressly praised the old French Materialists of the "Enlightenment" (such as Diderot) and denounced in the strongest terms the attempt of some contemporary revisionist Marxists to "smuggle in Idealism by the back door".

After the 1917 Revolution, the Bolsheviks conducted an organised campaign against religion as—in Marx's words—"the opium of the people", a prehistoric relic of animism deliberately cultivated by a decadent bourgeoisie which had opposed it during its own early revolutionary period for the express purpose of keeping the exploited

masses in material and mental subjugation.

The above attitude formed an integral part of Bolshevik theory and practice during the early years of the Soviet regime. Under Lenin's personal auspices, the League of Militant Atheists was founded to conduct this international propaganda.

And for some years before the war, the League was affiliated to the World Union of Freethinkers. It was represented at the World Congress in London in 1938 by E. Yaroslavsky. Earlier, in the Thirties and before the popular front, the English Communist expert on religion, the late T. A. Jackson, tried to form an English section of the League of Militant

Atheists and approached several English Socialists interested in religion, including this writer. But the project did not survive the ensuing changes in Russian policy.

This attitude in fact lasted until the advent of Hitler, when Stalin began to substitute his policy of the popular front for earlier revolutionary policies. And the new policy involved collaboration with liberal and anti-Fascist religionists, Christian Socialists and the like, the "red" Dean of Canterbury, Dr. Hewlett Johnson being the best-known example in this country. During the war, Stalin carried his collaboration policy still further by dissolving the League of Militant Atheists professedly "in the interest of national unity", and the Soviet government officially recognised the Russian Orthodox Church. In the East European peoples democracies set up under Russian auspices after the war, the state officially subsidised the churches, and atheistic propaganda organisations were discouraged, if not actually forbidden.

Catholicism and Communism

Whilst the Communist popular front met with some success in harnessing liberal and anti-Fascist religious elements into active collaboration, it continued to meet with implacable hostility from the Vatican. But since the accession of Pope John in 1958, Communist-Catholic collaboration seems to have made quite considerable progress, as is surely evident from the surprising information indicated above. Certainly Lenin would turn in his grave were he aware of the apparently official endorsement of de Chardin in the USSR! Just as presumably say, Pius XII, that fanatically pro-Fascist pope, would also indulge in post mortem gyrations were he to learn that French Communists are officially invited to lecture in Catholic universities like Louvain.

However, the present-day Communist regimes apparently consider that no popular front would be complete without God! As for the Vatican, we have had occasion to note before that its social evolution from chattel-slavery via feudalism and capitalism, to perhaps Christian socialism (if not eventually to downright communism), has been, if possible, even more elastic than has been its strictly theological "development" in Newman's phrase.

That cynical old humbug, the late Dean Inge, who cultivated God and Mammon simultaneously (and with

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Comrade Aquinas!

By F. A. RIDLEY

equal success), was once asked which he would prefer—the red International, or the black, the Catholic—both of which he detested about equally. His reply is stated to have been the red since red internationals come and go, but the black remains.

Today it would appear that the Communists are coming round to the same point of view. For in the hope perhaps,

that the Vatican may one day canonise Marx, the Communists are prepared already to publish Teilhard de Chardin as a *quid pro quo*. Perhaps the French Communist Party will presently issue an honorary membership card posthumously to Brother Thomas OP, who was, after all, a professor in 13th century Paris. Comrade Aquinas!

The Last Post

By GEORGE R. GOODMAN

Most people have, at one time or another, experienced bereavement. The scene in the mourner's house is generally somewhat like this:—A small group of people around a coffin, very silent. Sudden entry by a matter-of-fact clergyman who, without much ado, whips out a much-used ear-marked pocket edition of the Prayer Book and, in a horribly monotonous voice, begins to read the formal and utterly meaningless funeral service.

Nobody can follow or cares what he says, but the women-folk are generally dissolved in tears and are far too upset to listen to the black-gowned fellow's funeral farrago. All one seems to hear him say with great gusto a great number of times are "Christ" and "Lord Jesus Christ"; but the sentences do not make sense and are as far removed from our ways of thinking as the stars in the Milky Way.

It says in the Prayer Book that the priest shall not conduct the burial service "for any that die unbaptised, or are excommunicated or have laid violent hands upon themselves".

Meeting the corpse, he shall say or "sing": "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another".

Which is about the crudest hocus-pocus that religiously-crazed charlatans ever invented! For concentrated falsehoods and sacerdotal quackery, it is hard to beat!

Incorporated into the orthodox burial service is always Paul's letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. 15), copiously interpolated with words like "Christ" and "Christ Jesus". Considering that Paul never knew a man called "Jesus Christ" for the simple reason that he never existed, every sentence in Paul's letters that mentions these two words is an impudent forgery by later writers, merely to "confirm" the Church's impossible dogmas.

And if somebody had told Paul that he was a "Christian" and expounded "Christianity", he would undoubtedly have asked: "Prithee what is that?"

Incidentally, during the first century of our era, the word "mystery" meant a gathering of "initiated people", something on a par to a masonic order. Certain secrets were imparted to the members of the fraternity, and had not to be divulged to those who had not been initiated.

In those days, there were a great number of such mystery religions—for that is what they were. And if a Greek or a Roman wanted to change from (providing it existed) the "Independent Order of Golden Tortoises" to one that was holier and livelier and perhaps called "The Olympic Kirk of Latter Day Saints", then he would merely tell his friends that he had gone to "another mystery", meaning that he had joined another denomination.

To enumerate and elaborate on all the interpolations

and alterations in this one chapter of Corinthians would become boring, but there is one well-known and oft-quoted sentence that lends itself to an interesting dissertation which will throw an entirely new light on an otherwise obscure passage.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed".

Nobody can say today *what* were the words that Paul actually used, for the whole chapter is simply riddled with alterations and interpolations. Maybe, Paul wrote "let me tell you something about *our* mystery".

We shall not (all) sleep. Orthodox ministers explain the insertion of the word "all" as meaning: some will sleep for ever, but those "in Christ" will be raised. Thus, the outlook for the writer of this article and the Editor is distinctly gloomy!

"For the trumpet (shall) sound, and the dead (shall) be raised incorruptible, and we (shall) be changed". The early Christian Church twisted everything to suit her purposes and to "confirm" her dogmas; hence the insertion of the word shall, so as to make it a future tense.

When asked, how a dead person would hear "the trumpet", a minister replied that all "believers" would hear that signal! Presumably, those who are hard of hearing will be supplied with a "Christian" hearing aid, and unbelievers will remain in the nether regions, deaf to all entreaties.

One thing is *certain*. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he was *not* referring to a trumpet at a resurrection in a nebulous future, but to something that happened every day in Judaea; if not every day, then certainly several times a week! Here are the facts.

In the days of Paul (and before and after him) it was the custom, when a man was on his deathbed, to send for the Jewish priest or rabbi who would say a few words of comfort; all religionists do a similar thing nowadays too.

But, roughly 1900 years ago, the rabbi brought with him an assistant or clerk who carried the ceremonial ram's horn (shofar).

And when the dying man had given up the ghost and was good and truly dead, the rabbi would nod to the clerk who would then take the instrument out of its case.

Then the rabbi would call out the word "t'ru-o" (in Italian musical language today *tremolando*, note the similarity) and the clerk would produce the customary three notes; a sort of "farewell" fanfare, which the English-speaking people have copied in the form of "The Last Post" at military funerals and on Remembrance Days. *And the notes are almost identical!*

By the way, to produce any notes at all from a ram's horn is most difficult and requires weeks of practice.

Opinion off the Peg

By T. HILL

THE OTHER DAY somebody remarked: "I am an agnostic, but I have no axe to grind with the Churches; they have done a lot of good". The logic of this argument is on a par with that of another which could frequently be heard during the Italian invasion of Abyssinia: "... but Mussolini has made the trains run on time."

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the monasteries were the only remaining centres of culture and learning; the monks educated the semi-barbarian populace to become husbandmen and artisans; the noblemen they taught reading and writing; they were the advisers and counsellors of the kings whilst feeding some bread and soup to the starving. In this way they came to power and converted Europe to Christianity. People accepted the new religion not because of its persuasive beauty of teaching, but because they were dependent on its propagators.

Later, missionaries went to foreign lands and, closely linked with the Bible, brought education to backward peoples, instilling in them the idea that our greater knowledge and higher standard of living were the outcome of our religious beliefs. In order to share these manifest advantages, many considered it useful to change their gods. However, in the wake of the missionaries came the colonisers, the vendors of liquor and opium traders. The good the Churches had done bore thousandfold profit. Wherever the clerics trod, the tender plant of independent thinking and personal freedom wilted and people were forced to move in the chain-mail of medieval doctrine.

Children are still being brain-washed, some until they become obsessed neurotics and believe that death opens the gate to eternal life, whilst life itself is sinful. Thanks to their mortifying doctrines the Churches have been able to oppose every human progress in the name of a handy figment of fantasy. Being wealthy themselves, they are the natural allies of the rich and together they work to perpetuate the old order. Religion and freedom are incompatible as are fire and water. Therefore he who refuses to challenge the Church gives her the right to speak and lay down the rules for our lives in your name and mine.

The necessity to fight the religious *institutions* in the interest of progress and freedom does, however, by no means include our opposition to *individual* members of religious institutions who may be noble-hearted citizens. My admiration for the late Pope John as an outstanding human being is independent of my fight against the institution of the Roman Catholic Church as a spiritual prison.

Since the beginning of recorded history, that is since the exploitation of man through man, religion has played an ambivalent role: it has provided a comforting dream of "pie in the sky" to those unable to free themselves and, at the same time, has lent the halo of divine approval to all forms of class society and social injustice. God is the imaginary scarecrow in the field of private property and any attempt at force to achieve social changes is tantamount to rebellion against the will of the Lord.* In this way, as the French saying goes, "the dead are at the throats of the living."

No wonder then that we have become accustomed to

accepting the current notions handed down from generation to generation as being good and proper in one set and abhorrent in another, without asking questions. People who think for themselves are very rare; but even rarer are those independent enough to act according to their independent findings. Who in the West would for a moment doubt that Christianity is the highest expression of morality — despite the shameful results we see around us every day. Vested interests have repeated this lie over and over again until everybody — as in the story of the Emperor's new clothes — is under the same deception.

From time to time, the younger generation rebel against the traditional norms by which their elders live; however, there is no intelligent searching for new and better standards. They merely act and dress in obvious opposition to the up-to-now accepted standards and thus create another norm and another uniform. They invent mannerisms and exterior shibboleths to which they all conform.

When I expressed surprise that even a group of youth-hostelling girls wore those ridiculous pointed shoes that were the fashion then, their leader replied: "You wouldn't like us to feel frustrated for being different from other young girls?" To create another money-spinner, some ruthless fashion tycoon gives out a new edict and all females hobble on stiletto stilts.

I think most sensible people will agree that it is not necessary to choke our postal channels with trashy Christmas cards uttering magical wishes to people whom we probably wish well all the year round. But who will break the habit at the peril of appearing mean and impolite? At the same time, parents go to incredible lengths of idiocy to persuade their children that it is not they who are to be thanked for expensive presents but some pagan figure who, to top it all, has to come through the chimney. This idea and the traditional stocking (or for that matter the throwing of confetti at newly-weds) had a magical meaning in pagan times but is no longer understood. We no longer believe in domestic spirits, but the bride has still to be carried over the threshold.

The law of inertia appears to apply not only to matter but also to our thinking. At a time when nearly everything is mass-produced, public opinion too is a commodity off the conveyor belt of press and radio. And as these are completely in the hands of the ruling class, it can be said that the "dominant ideas are the ideas of the dominant social class." Snobbishness requires us to write to Mr Brown as "Brown Esquire" (which in fact makes him the shield-bearer of a noble knight) and his good lady has to be addressed as Mrs John Brown, as if she were his chattel and had no individual first name.

Most people nowadays no longer bother about religion — except at special occasions where one *has* to conform. However, as a recent survey showed, a majority of parents want their children to receive religious instruction at school which, they believe, will give them a moral foundation in life. No wonder then that there are still hundreds of sacred cows which nobody dares touch. No Member of Parliament who wants to keep his seat would unnecessarily offend ancient religious views on, say, homosexuality, abortion, blasphemy and obscenity laws, sabbatarian strictures, *et al.*

Some 150 million people in Italy, San Marino, Andorra, (Concluded on page 230)

* Accordingly, up to the French Revolution, all political and social conflicts were fought under the guise of religious controversies. Whilst religion provided the formal slogans for the Peasants Wars and Reformation, the causes were social; and the Crusades were in effect the first colonial wars.

This Believing World

AS WAS to be expected the centenary of the founding of the Salvation Army by "General" Booth received ample publicity from the press, the radio, and TV. We had pictures of the pioneers of its early days, though very little was said about the way the early converts were scoffed at, and how the Salvation Army's religion of "Blood and Fire" was derided by other Christian Churches much in the same way as Jehovah's Witnesses are these days. Even the (more or less young) lady converts with their tambourines were only just touched upon. Nowadays, the girls prefer hymns arranged to be played as pop music.

★

BUT THE really surprising thing about all the publicity was in the way that the social services of the Army were stressed, and very little was said about its "Blood and Fire". No one could have suspected, for instance, that the Army's first care in those early days was to rescue sinners from hell and damnation. We got no pictures of how wife-beaters and child-torturers, as well as burglars and drunkards were "saved" by the Army's prayers—how they all became worthy members of society through the saving Grace of Christ. In other words, the *religious* work of the Army was under-stressed. One thing however was clear. The Army's many millions in money and property show how religion can pay—not through prayer but through ordinary business acumen.

★

WHILE Protestant curates and vicars are sometimes made to look figures of fun—rarely do we see Catholic priests laughed at on stage or screen—our bishops have almost always been revered as veritable "men of God". However, there are exceptions, and according to a *Daily Mail* headline (30/6/65), "Crowd Boos Bishop out of Hall". This unhappy occasion in which a man threatened the 70-year-old Bishop of Colchester was a "rowdy" annual meeting of the Colchester Branch of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals which has had to close down a cats' and dogs' home. The Bishop declared that when people lost their sense of proportion they "tend to become animals themselves", a description which made at least one man want to "clobber" him, and the principal speakers had to "close down".

★

IT SHOULD not be forgotten that the youngsters who are responsible for train-wrecking, smashing street lamps, and for vandalism in general, all receive at school and home at least a formal Christian training. Yet churches suffer as well as the railways. For example, the church of St. John the Divine in Kennington "is under siege from child wreckers" (*South London Press*, 18/6/65). These young vandals recently caused £200 worth of damage to the interior, and stone-throwing at church windows goes on "all the time". Nobody appears to know how to stop all this, but one thing is certain, Christian training is no good.

★

ALMOST with tears in its pages, the *People* (20/6/65) begged Mr. Wilson to "put a stop to Sunday snoopers". This really means "to scrap the crazy laws which now restrict our leisure activities on Sundays". Well, we Free-thinkers have been trying to do this for over a century. Even Charles Dickens did his best to have them scrapped over 130 years ago, but to no purpose. They were part and parcel of the British way of life on God's Holy and Happy Day of Rest. There are indications now that attitudes are changing, but can we depend on either the Tory or Labour Party openly to oppose the Sabbatarians?

Specimens of Faith

LAST WEEK I heard about a woman who has eleven children. She is a Roman Catholic, thirty-six years old, and she suffers from arthritis. The children are unkempt and live in squalor. Some of them are sickly, others have been in trouble for truancy. The woman does not want another child, nor does her husband, who earns twelve pounds a week as a labourer. They are both hoping that the Pope will "see his way to allowing Roman Catholics to use contraceptives."

There is nothing to be gained here from arguing the case for contraception for all who require it. The pros and cons are well known and the need for some form of contraception is accepted by most thoughtful people not committed to Roman Catholic doctrine. Eventually one may expect this acceptance to be forced on the Vatican. But for the moment it is perhaps worth looking at the effects of the current Roman Catholic policy on families such as the one mentioned.

One cannot say with certitude that this couple would have been happier had they limited their family. However, they would have had more money to spend on themselves and on each child. They would have had more room, and the children would individually have received more attention. The mother would not have had the strain of bearing a child annually and would have been spared the struggle of rearing many children at the same time. As it is, she and her husband are in a situation which, for them, has made happy family life almost impossible. It has become a grim despairing battle to ward off a succession of crises. Anything approaching a sensitive awareness of the children's needs is impossible, and the home often verges on chaos. The father escapes to the pub from time to time, and the mother muddles along as best she can by giving her attention to the child who seems to have the most immediate claim. Because of their thinking, apparently of a low order and moulded by their Church, they are unable to question, let alone refute, Roman Catholic teaching. They can only acquiesce. Meanwhile the welfare state helps them along and contributes towards the children's education in the kind of religious schools which fashioned their parents' beliefs.

It is the uneducated Roman Catholic who bears the brunt of the Vatican's views on birth control. The educated, middle class Catholic somehow manages to escape the predicament of his less fortunate brother. He may manage this, of course, by a judicious use of the so-called safe period. It seems more likely, however, that he has the wit to square his conscience so that he can practise contraception. But the poor and uneducated, like so many oxen, are bowed and often broken from following to the letter the teaching of their priests. Such is the predicament of some of these Catholics that we have the extraordinary spectacle of sympathetic priests publicly defying the Vatican on this question.

At this moment thousands of children are living in families so large that the parents are overwhelmed by their difficulties. Many of these parents, Catholics and others, beget children casually and without thought of the future. But the non-Catholics are open to help. It is possible to encourage responsibility and restraint in bearing children. These families, with their concentration on the immediate and their unconcern for the future, may be loth to bother with contraceptives, but the agents of the state who often deal with them have some hope of success. The subject is not taboo.

(Concluded on page 231)

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD. (Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY. Every Friday, 8 p.m.: L. EBURY and J. A. MILLAR.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday. 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

Notes and News

FROM now on—or at least as long as Sir Edward Gowers's revision of it survives—Fowler's *Modern English Usage* will contain a record of its compiler's unbelief. After leaving Oxford, H. W. Fowler spent seventeen years as a master at Sedbergh, but his career there was ended by a difference of opinion with his headmaster, H. G. Hart. Fowler, "never a professing Christian", could not, Sir Edward states in his preface, "conscientiously undertake to prepare boys for confirmation". So, as Hart "held this to be an indispensable part of a housemaster's duty", Fowler was passed over for a vacant housemastership. "He protested; Hart was firm; and Fowler resigned". G. G. Coulton, whose biographical sketch provided the basis for Sir Edward Gowers's account, compared Fowler to Socrates. Though a non-Christian, Fowler had "all the virtues claimed as distinctively Christian", and, like Socrates, "was one of those rare people, sincere and unostentatious, to whom the conduct of life is *ars artium*".

★

THE Methodist Conference might have resolved—on July 6th—to seek closer relations with the Church of England. But there is, according to Dr. Leslie Newman, chairman of the Voice of Methodism group, "not a ghost of a chance" of intercommunion being achieved in the near future. His group was in no way anti-Anglican, Dr. Newman explained. "If we were invited to become part of something like a unified Church of Christ in England, bringing all the churches together, it would be a different matter", he said, "but the proposals as they stand provide for our absorption by Anglicanism without any real contribution to the worldwide coming together of denominations" (*The Sunday Times*, 4/7/65). At present the Methodists enjoy an "open table" with other Free Churches in Britain, but union with the Anglicans would mean a "closed table", at least until the other Free

Churches were drawn into the discussions. So the ecumenical disputes continue: closed tables; open tables. But how many people care?

★

DISPUTE, too, in the United States, centring, moreover, around Luci Johnson, the 17-year-old daughter of the President. Bishop James Pike of the Episcopal Church described Miss Johnson's re-baptism in the Roman Catholic Church as an insult and a direct slap at the Episcopal Church (*The Guardian*, 5/7/65). While praising her for making her own religious choice, the Bishop deplored her re-baptism, since the Catholic Church recognised the validity of Episcopalian baptism. He would demand an apology from Miss Johnson and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Washington. Catholic officials stated that the decision to re-baptise Miss Johnson was not a decision of the hierarchy.

★

C. BRADLAUGH BONNER, President of the World Union of Freethinkers, reports that a letter he has received from the German Freethinker, Hubert Freistühler contains the following paragraph: "The case against me for endangering the state and for blasphemy, which has been dragging on since 1960 at last came up for judgment this February, when the five-day trial ended in acquittal on the first charge and a fine of 600 marks for insulting the Church". Mr. Bonner recalls that in 1960 police entered Mr. Freistühler's bookshop and took away various volumes on which the charge of sedition and blasphemy was based. "Effectively he has been acquitted on both charges, though fined for libelling the Church".

★

WHEN entering his local station recently, the *Daily Worker* columnist Walter Holmes received a leaflet recording the "greatest transaction" of the American millionaire J. Pierpont Morgan (29/6/65). It turned out to be Mr. Morgan's will, in which he wrote: "I commit my soul in the hands of my Saviour full of confidence that, having redeemed it and washed it with his most precious blood, he will present it faultless before the throne of my heavenly Father". Reading on, Mr. Holmes discovered that the millionaire didn't merely "indulge in a pious hope that he might be saved"; he made a firm offer through his "personal saviour". As it was well backed by millions of dollars, Mr. Holmes commented, "I imagine that J. Pierpont Morgan got by".

★

WE WELCOME the letter in the names of Clive Eaton, Leon Griffiths, Troy Kennedy-Martin, David Mercer and Ken Taylor, proposing an organisation to counteract "the pressures which are attempting to subvert the BBC" (*The Guardian*, 6/5/65). Groups which at one time seemed "a mere nuisance" are now "a positive danger", the more so—the letter pointed out—"since their attitudes coincide with those of many MPs' whose uninformed speeches . . . reveal a common desire to see the Corporation's output reduced to mere soporifics". If the MRA, Mrs. Whitehouse, and the commercial lobbies succeed in their campaigns "the largest and most important channel of free expression in this country will be lost".

★

RICHMOND and Twickenham Humanist Group is to hold a garden party on Saturday evening, August 21st., at the home of one of its members, G. Landsborough, 46 Ormond Avenue, Hampton, Middlesex. Neighbouring Humanist Groups are invited to turn up in force. There will, Mr. Landsborough says, be "no raffles, no charges" just "pure humanism".

Opinion off the Peg

By T. HILL

(Concluded from page 227)

Liechtenstein, Ireland, Chile, Brazil and Spain have to marry in church with no hope for divorce redress. Millions of durable human connections are considered concubinary and their offspring illegitimate. Cases are known where an adulteress goes abroad, gets a divorce and remarries; she can demand to be supported by her deserted husband as by law he is still her legal husband! It took an Italian ex-serviceman from the First World War 47 years to get his marriage dissolved. When he returned from the front, his wife had gone abroad and remarried. So, in order to keep the door to freedom ajar, Italian couples nowadays exchange letters before marriage stipulating conditions which are considered immoral in Canon Law, such as: "Our marriage is contracted for a duration of five years and under the strict understanding that each part retains his/her full liberty to have extra-marital love affairs." This, properly laid down with a notary, gives about 12,000 Italian couples per year the possibility to go to court and get a civil divorce.

A Socialist Deputy, who in 1954 tried to alter the Italian divorce laws, found himself publicly attacked and vilified and was not re-elected.

It is the social task of both religion and tradition to preserve the old, thereby perpetuating injustice and social prerogatives. The close alliance between the wealthy Churches and the capitalist state is a sort of mutual insurance, guaranteed by the mental laziness of the public at large.

It is false to assert that religion is primarily concerned with the way man is to treat his fellow men; its main concern is how he has to worship his god in fear of the hereafter and remembering divine approval of the prevailing state of things.

It is a deceptive lie that all men are born equal (the British Trade Union and Labour movements sprang from this Christian fallacy with the result that the Labour Party never grew Marxist teeth, whilst the clergy developed some leftist tendencies). It stands to reason that the son born into a rich family starts life with an advantage; he gets better education and later occupies commanding positions in society. Consequently, the state belongs to the wealthy. Democracy gives the man in the street the impression he, too, has a say in the direction of policies, whilst it leaves the reins of decision in the hands of big business. Just at this moment you may be sent to Malaysia to die for interests in rubber and tin. In the world's richest country, the United States, it becomes clear that you must be very rich — or be a manager of the rich — to run for state office, which explains why the US cannot have a progressive policy or party.

And how is it possible that minority views become "public opinion"? Because this "public opinion" is being spelled out by and canalised through the millionaire press. No individual or group publication can profitably compete with mass-circularised daily papers, magazines and lush illustrated weeklies from the huge modern plants of the press barons. They not only own the latest machinery but also the raw material (forests, pulp and paper mills), and with cheap stocks of printing paper and select writers they sell you pages and pages for the price others have to ask for a poor four-pager. And most of it is paid for by advertisements before they even start printing. This is how

the ruling set formulates and regulates "public opinion" and no election, however free, can really express the aspirations of the less privileged citizen.

Even more potent opinion moulders are radio and television. The Independent Television Authority, being merely an extended arm of the press trusts, eagerly spreads the Holy Smoke. The BBC charter prohibits advertising unless in propagation of the Christian faith; the BBC is, therefore, a little bit more independent than Independent TV and in order to infringe on this latitude, the millionaire press keeps up a hue and cry about "smut", "obscenity" and "blasphemy". If in the face of this challenge we keep quiet, they may prevail. It is a Turkish saying that only the child that cries is taken to the breast.

Are merely the enemies of progress permitted to shout and threaten with acts of repression and boycott if they dislike something shown or printed? So far, religious blackmail is not being prosecuted.

This sorry state of affairs is only possible because of our silence. We must learn to repel attack in counter-attack. Be clear about that!

A Clerical Critic

Someone, who cut his name from the top corner, from shame, I presume, sent me some time ago, a copy of THE FREETHINKER, of December 14th AD 1962. As a Christian, I too am a Freethinker, but have only just found time from more important interests to read it.

I admire, as you apparently don't, the efforts of the Jews to explain the then known history of man, of which efforts there is little to be ashamed of, much less sneered at.

But you avoid the obvious fact deduced from modern knowledge, that human history is still in its infancy, with its love of violence, etc. Time, after all, is a fourth dimension, and it is becoming clearer that it is a conception of ours, which has no meaning in cosmogony.

On the origin of life, where matter tends to disintegrate, you have nothing to say. Yet ultra-microscopic beings have developed from the mythical electronic world in a few million years into conscious groups, and even in man into a self-conscious group, with marvellous eyes, adapted to enjoy and develop a wide set of vibrations which are interpreted as beautiful colours, infra red rays, and ultra violet ones. Hearing and the rest of the six senses, quite impossible developments with revolutionary design, are sorted out from a single cell, into the marvellously different ones, e.g. for nerve, muscle, and skin, etc.; though an occasional outlaw starts cancer, or fails to form anything other than morons, or other defectives.

Even pain has an essential purpose, and where we cannot "take it" often produces marvels of courage, and even happy acceptance. After all, we are not merely individuals but members of a society whose greatest joy is in service to others, especially the helpless, not in ignorance like THE FREETHINKER, which would lead to self shame and chaos.

Your arguments are too childish to be taken seriously, and remind me of the parable of the chicken locked in a dark barn, who did not believe in a world outside its own environment.

Yours very sincerely, and somewhat sorrowfully,

(REV.) FRED. R. CRADDOCK, MB,ChB,DTM

[One may or may not admire the efforts of the Jews to explain the "then known history of man", they were certainly not original. The point is, however, that we don't accept the biblical explanation today. We don't accept the mythical fall of man and therefore have no need of a mythical redemption. On the origin of life it would have been better, we suggest that Mr. Craddock should have said nothing, since what he says is either confused or meaningless, ("mythical electronic world"?). Pain has on occasion a warning function, not a purpose; and extreme pain degrades, it does not uplift. And the outlaws, they rather mar a perfect design, don't they Mr. Craddock?—Ed.]

A Christian Existentialist

By F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

A Berdyaev Anthology

Selected and translated by Donald A. Lowrie
(George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 55/-)

EXISTENTIALISM has attracted a following in the modern world. In many ways, it may be seen as a jaded and tired reaction within a world where violent discord has succeeded to the orderly progress which was the dream of the Victorian rationalist. Put briefly, it is the denial of reason and adopts a pessimistic view of man. Life tends to be interpreted in a state of crisis and crisis is met with an emotional, non-rational reaction which transcends reason. So far as the question of religion comes into the picture, the conclusion to be reached depends very largely upon the existentialist act of faith. Protestant thinkers following this course have commonly fallen back upon the strange pessimistic Christianity of Kierkegaard, the Danish existentialist of a century ago who charted out a path not altogether distasteful to Karl Barth and the earlier stages of his movement. On the other hand, it is possible to interpret the same point of view over into atheism pure and simple, the standpoint of the left-bank Parisian existentialists of whom Sartre is the best known in this country.

So far as Christian existentialism is concerned, the Russian thinker, Berdyaev, has always occupied a favoured niche. He was a product of reaction from the Marxism of the Russian Revolution and for long a prominent figure in *émigré* orthodox circles. His theology tended to be formless and mystical, whilst his theological moralisings upon the world situation were couched in terms of crisis and eschatology. Certain major concepts governed his mind. Man is a free spirit, an assertion which he reconciled with Christian belief and saw as antagonistic to Marxist Communism. There is a God-man relationship which determines the fulfilment of the potentialities of the human spirit. In this relationship, man is a co-creator with God.

For many years, Dr. Lowrie was a colleague of Berdyaev and became his biographer as well as one of his major exponents. He has now produced a definitive anthology of Berdyaev's voluminous theological writings.

For anybody who wishes to delve into Berdyaev's thought and to discover the lines upon which the Russian theologian worked out his philosophy of religion and of life, it cannot be commended too highly.

But, it is difficult to imagine that the secularist will find very much sympathy with Berdyaev. If he be claimed for any form of humanism, it must be for a humanism which is in no sense secularistic and which stands over against any type of naturalism. Berdyaev was a theist first and foremost, and his speculations concerning man see humanity as existing within the final relationships of a theistic pattern. His conception of man as a free spirit was something entirely different to that of, for example, Mill in his essay *On Liberty*, or any other of the more important liberal thinkers. The rationalistic tradition would make of human reason and experience something very different to that which Berdyaev chiselled out with his theology. In the last resort, Berdyaev was concerned through and through with a concept of "the eternal", whilst the monistic humanist is concerned with the world of the here and the now. Berdyaev claimed to experience an order transcending that of the universe of time and space. The secularistic humanist would reply that he has no evidence of the existence of any such order or any knowledge of its content.

These are fundamental differences, and there is no bridge over from the existentialism of Berdyaev to that of the liberal humanist whose appeal is to a universe interpreted by scientific methods of comparison and experiment. The liberal appeal is to the world as seen by the generations inspired through Darwin and Huxley, a world in which there is no room for the inherited mysticism of the Russian Orthodox Church, a mysticism centring in the icon rather than in the laboratory. Yet it is essential that the point of view expounded by Berdyaev should be known and understood. It has had an important effect upon many Christians who have been perplexed by the impact of the twentieth century upon their faith. If only for this reason, we would commend Dr. Lowrie's scholarly anthology as the most useful source-book of the subject available to the English reader.

SPECIMENS OF FAITH

(Concluded from page 228)

The Catholics, however, have been told that contraception is wrong. Discussion is often not possible because families do not have the freedom to think and decide for themselves. They are shackled with outmoded and harmful beliefs which are regarded as ridiculous by most of their contemporaries. Even when the health of the mother is in jeopardy these foolish beliefs prevail. Like dinosaurs, Catholics flounder in an age which has passed them by. Strangely, they may live in a welter of immorality yet still cling to the precious ideal of shunning contraception. They are specimens of faith. They merit study.

D.W.

Faiths, Forgeries and Relics by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler.
(An excerpt from *Crimes of Christianity*) Price 1s. plus postage 4d.
from THE FREETHINKER Bookshop
103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE LDOS—REPLY TO ALBERT T. PETERS

Surely, you are not still squirming and writhing under the lash of the agnostic defender of Sunday freedom, yours truly, after all this time? I refer, of course, to our TV appearance last February, when, as you quote, "you were brought down in flames".

Probably you, my dear "Christian" friend, imbibed a great deal of theological learning at college, but apparently you weren't taught to take a thrashing like a man! It seems to have taken over five months to write—to a secular, atheist and agnostic journal, of *all* papers—that which surely you should have shot back at me when we met on TWW. Instead of which, I and thousands of viewers—remember, you sat with your head in your hands, eyes closed, seemingly snivelling and mumbling to your own peculiar little god, to put some words into your mouth, or to strike dumb this devil's agent, and uplift you out of the Slough of Despond into which it was obvious to all you had fallen! Or was your letter to THE FREETHINKER an order from your superiors in London to try to vindicate yourself and the LDOS?

Yet when I wrote to you, time and again (prompted by a pang of remorse at subjecting a fellow creature to such humiliation) and even invited you and your family to my home—for I don't hate

you, only what you represent and stand for—I received no reply whatsoever.

Quoting you “Mr. Shephard has *at least* [my italics] woken to the fact that the LDOS is a force to be reckoned with”—my dear Mr. “Piety” Peters, I’ve never said or thought otherwise for years, since “Misery” Martin’s days, in fact, and I *did* state on TWW that I realised I was involved in a David and Goliath struggle with the powerful and rich LDOS, but I had every faith in my son David’s ability with the sling and his strong right arm, and my own ability to provide the “stones” therefore! Remember, Mr. Peters, or were you praying?

And, I asked you if you were proud, and if your wife was proud of you, for earning a living by snooping and informing upon children and calling them “unholy” for wanting to give a show in Torquay, to benefit handicapped and underprivileged youngsters. Remember, Mr. Peters, or were you still praying? Was this questioning on my part, of the activities of your ghastly Society really such “uncontrolled, unreasoning and unintelligent ravings?” Or the fact you *couldn’t* answer, so much “imagination” on my part?

Quoting you again, friend Piety, “the *large majority* of MPs . . . are not so well disposed to Mr. Shephard’s way of thinking” If this is so, and means that the LDOS has an overwhelming amount of support in Parliament, which I very much doubt, from my own contact with influential people—and would like proof—*outside* proof, *not* Mr. Peters’s or Mr. Legerton’s—what do these MPs’ constituents think of this? To use a colloquialism—come off it, Piety, you might kid your unquestioning, simple open-mouthed-in-wonder Christian LDOS fellow-travellers, but *not* John and David Shephard, *nor* the growing numbers of supporters of this Sunday Freedom League! Don’t forget Mr. Peters, that the LDOS has had 134 years in which to grow, whereas the Freedom League has been going only 8 months.

Finally, my offer of hospitality still holds good. Come and see me, and help me in the garden, preferably one Sunday!

Yours as ever, JOHN SHEPHARD.

As a friend, workmate, and supporter of John Shephard in his fight against the activities of the Lord’s Day Observance Society, I would like to refute the statements made by Albert E. Peters, the Society’s local agent here in the West. Co-supporters listed with me below, are with John Shephard in these matters.

Quoting from Mr. Peters’s letter—“Mr. Shephard has good reason to be upset about this”—I can assure you, knowing John and his sense of humour and fun, and his appreciation of the ludicrous, he would be the last one to worry about the obvious misrepresentations about public and parliamentary opinion on Peters’s queer society. Incidentally those of us who saw, with many others, the TV appearance in question, are unanimous in our opinion that:

1. John conducted himself with complete propriety and control even though burdened at that time with a fierce and understandable indignation at the contemptible activities of the Lord’s Day Observance Society in stopping the children’s charity show in Torquay. This was the only possible attitude that John Shephard could have taken. As he has said since, logic, reason

and discussion are, like sarcasm, lost on the fanatical and the very young! I personally thought that Mr. Peters’s performance was pathetic! What a meek and sorry figure he looked. If all the rest of the LDOS are of the same weak-willed calibre, then no wonder they pray to the Lord for sustenance.

2. We very much hope that any reply to Mr. Peters’s letter that John may make will be inserted in the correspondence columns of THE FREETHINKER, though I really do not think he is unduly perturbed about this, as the Peters person and his queer society leave him (John) quite cold.

S. A. RICHARDS, Brislington, 4, W. LERPINIÈRE, Keynsham, A. W. BREWER, Warmley, STAN RICHARDS, Bristol, A. C. BADMAN, Bristol, N. COLE, Bristol, F. STONE, Bristol, A. STRANGE, Bristol.

D. DYSON.

AGNOSTICS ADOPTION SOCIETY

I think Mrs Ebury (June 25th) is unduly perturbed by my reference to the absence of credal tests in the work of the Agnostics Adoption Society. There is a long waiting list of atheists and agnostics, and I do not imagine that any jesuitical plot to flood the society with Catholic applications would get very far.

Most atheists would not however, I imagine, wish to set up *L’Eglise Libre Pensée*. It is the whole basis of the Secularist position that professional qualifications and “social and ethical merit” are more important than ideological labels. Especially is this true today when religious labels are often purely nominal. It is also a Secularist position that no mystical right is conferred on people by the fact that they are natural parents, and that those who are actually bringing the children up should be responsible for their training.

Probably Mrs. Ebury and I are agreed in considering that some creeds, for example 100 per cent orthodox Roman Catholicism or Exclusive Brotherhood, are so warping psychologically that their adherents would not make suitable adopters in any circumstances. But every individual must be judged individually.

DAVID TRIBE.

OBITUARY

The North London branch of the National Secular Society has lost a firm friend and member through the death of Mr. F. H. Bohringer. He was aged 65 and had been ill for several months. The funeral took place with civic honours at Enfield Crematorium.

F. H. Bohringer was a native of Suffolk, and became involved in politics and public affairs in 1922. Since then he had been active in a number of organisations including the National Unemployed Committee Movement, the Old Age Pensioners Federation and the National Cripples Reform League. He was particularly interested in the affairs of Tottenham, and served on the Trades Council, the Town Safety Committee and the Co-operative Society.

He was a former Mayor of Tottenham and the present Mayor’s tribute will be echoed by the deceased’s many friends “He served well his fellow citizens”.

EVA EBURY.

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The Freethinker

Volume LXXXV—No. 30

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SOME TIME ago, the BBC presented on television, a spectacular and impressive feature on the Battle of Culloden—May 16th, 1746—that put an end to the Jacobite movement in Great Britain. A subsequent article of mine inspired by this outstanding production, elicited some critical letters, naturally from chiefly Scottish sources. Partly in order to deal with some points at issue, I subjoin a more general article upon the Jacobite movement, including the '45.

The Jacobite rising of 1745-61 marked the end of a century-long political struggle between the medieval regime of the absolutist and Roman Catholic Stuarts on the one hand, and the Protestant bourgeoisie upon the other. A long and bitter struggle marked by dramatic vicissitudes and by alternate revolutions, restorations and counter-revolutions, it began and ended in Scotland. It began with the armed rising of the Scottish Calvinists in 1640 against the attempt of Charles I, to force episcopacy and a High Church ritual upon the Presbyterian (Calvinist) Church of Scotland, and it ended—as was recently brilliantly depicted in the BBC documentary—upon Culloden Moor in 1746, when the last despairing charge of the Jacobite Highland clans broke before the sustained fire of the Hanoverian redcoats.

The Auld Alliance

The Stuarts (connected by marriage with Robert Bruce, Scotland's liberator at Bannockburn in 1314) had reigned over Scotland since the 14th century, prior to the accession of James VI of Scotland as James I of England in 1603. That Scotland, despite repeated invasions by its far more powerful southern neighbour, had succeeded in maintaining its independence for over three centuries (since Edward I—1272-1307—first attempted to found an English Empire in Great Britain by the conquest of Scotland) was solely due to Scotland's Auld Alliance with France, which had been initiated by Sir William Wallace about 1300 and continued down to Culloden, where French troops fought in the Jacobite army. A glance at the respective economic resources of England and Scotland at this time, makes it evident that without the continuous French aid Scotland could not possibly have resisted for long. For example, an Italian (Venetian) despatch early in the 16th century, tells us that the respective revenues of Henry VIII of England and of James IV of Scotland, were 1,309,000 gold ducats and 90,000 gold ducats: that is, England was about fourteen times as rich as Scotland. One might just as well imagine, say, the modern Swiss Republic waging war successfully against France or Germany. As it was, we learn from the same Italian source that there was not a nobleman or noble woman in Scotland who was not in the pay of the most Christian King (of France); also that the French government kept a permanent Army of Scotland, an expeditionary force that could reach any part of Scotland within two days. Put briefly, the Stuarts reigned over Scotland as French Royalists or Gauleiters. A contemporary English proverb (cited

by Shakespeare in Henry V) concisely sums up the military situation: "He who would France win, must with Scotland first begin". The Auld Alliance in a nutshell!

The Stuarts and the Counter-Reformation

From 1603 to 1688, the Stuarts were also the titular kings of England, though Scotland remained a separate kingdom. And this stormy era bisected by the English Civil War and the subsequent Restoration of the Stuarts

in 1660, was marked by a series of violent struggles between the absolute monarchy of the half-French and crypto-Catholic Stuarts and the English Protestant bourgeoisie. The final overthrow of the Stuarts by the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688-9, was ultimately due

to their attempt to extend the Auld Alliance to England, to rule like Louis XIV, champion of the Jesuit-led Counter-Reformation. Charles II had been received on his deathbed into the Roman Catholic Church by a Jesuit, and James II was a fanatical tool of the Jesuits who tried to overawe Protestant London with a Catholic Irish army. The "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 expelled the Stuarts and finally established the Protestant succession.

The Stuarts did not fall without another Civil War, chiefly fought in Ireland and Scotland. But they were eventually forced to retire to France, where they set up a government-in-exile under French protection. It would appear that had James's son (of the same name, dubbed by the Hanoverians as the "Old Pretender") been willing to join the Church of England, he might have been recalled to the English throne upon the death of his half-sister, Queen Anne (Stuart) in 1714. But since he remained faithful to Rome, "George in pudding time came o'er" (as the contemporary *Vicay of Bray* expressed it) and founded the present Hanoverian dynasty. Again the Stuarts took up arms in Scotland, and James himself came over. But the '45 fizzled out, whilst the Act of Union (1707) between England and Scotland, officially ended Scotland as a separate kingdom.

The '45

The Stuarts however, had one final card to play. For, after 1715 the Hanoverian general, Marshal Wade, dug roads through the hitherto inaccessible Scottish Highlands and began to undermine the patriarchal clan-system. This induced a number of the clans to rally to the cause of the Stuarts, paradoxically more in defence of their traditional primitive communism than of absolute monarchy.

Accordingly, when in the Summer of 1745, Charles Stuart, the "Young Pretender", made a daring raid into Scotland he was soon able to raise a Highland army, at the head of which he occupied Edinburgh, beat the English regulars twice—at Prestonpans and at Falkirk—and actually invaded England. He got as far as Derby before he made his controversial decision to retreat, the wisdom of which, and his alternative chance of success had he continued his advance on London, have been hotly disputed by subsequent historians.

The spectacular episode of the '45 finally ended in

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Jacobite Movement

By F. A. RIDLEY

disaster at Culloden, to be followed by savage repression under "Butcher" Cumberland. The personal role played in the '45 by the Stuart Pretender, has been the subject of much controversy, and the real military brain seems to have been Lord George Murray rather than its titular chief. But the last of the Stuarts certainly demonstrated courage and charm, useful qualities in the leader of what was by then a forlorn hope. Incidentally, the last Stuart demonstration occurred in 1760 when, during a miners' strike at Elswick, the strikers proclaimed James Stuart, king. Thereafter, Stuart romanticism melted into the smoke of the dawning Industrial Revolution.

The Jacobite Epitaph

A 17th century Scottish Republican, a bitter enemy of the Stuarts—Fletcher of Saltoun—once went on record with the historic remark that a nation's songs are more important ultimately than are its laws. And today the Jacobite movement is kept alive not by its medieval politics, but by its superb songs. We do not envy anyone who can remain unmoved by the haunting *Loch Lomond* or *The Skye Boat Song*. It seems fair comment that the Jacobite movement will still be remembered in and by its songs long after the thunder of the English guns has died away upon Culloden Moor.

Why Not Secularism?

By H. CUTNER

ONE of the characteristics of Freethinkers is their apparent inability to agree what they shall call themselves. What they have always wanted was a sort of all-inclusive nomenclature which everybody would understand, and which would offend nobody. Should they be called Deists or Atheists, Secularists or Agnostics, Humanists or Ethicists—or what?

Thomas Paine insisted that he was a Deist, for example, but very few Christians would agree he was one. He was for them an Atheist. Yet his description of God as the Creator of "Nature", was not very different from that of Christians today. But Paine did not believe in the God of the Bible, and so he was an Atheist for all who did.

George Jacob Holyoake was an Atheist, but he did not like the word. So he invented "secularism"—a word which appears to me an excellent one for describing an unbelieving Freethinker. Here are two definitions: The principles of the Secularists, which are founded on an exclusive regard to the interests of this life (Nuttall). The belief that politics, morals, education, etc., should be independent of religion (Chambers).

Both definitions could be upheld by Secularists these days, for they clearly mean that we can leave religion completely out of all our affairs. That was all I think Holyoake meant when he coined the word. It was readily adopted by most, if not all, Freethinkers as a splendid word defining their position; and when a hundred years ago Charles Bradlaugh decided to join the scattered Freethought societies into one body, he called it the National Secular Society.

Bradlaugh readily adopted the term secularism, but his interpretation of it differed radically from that of Holyoake; and this difference of opinion eventually led to a debate between the two leaders in 1870 when Bradlaugh was only 37 years old. A report of the debate was published, and must have had a great success, for it has become exceedingly scarce. When I was collecting as many of Bradlaugh's debates as I could find, I was utterly unable to come across a copy, though eventually one was given to me by a friend.

In her biography of her father, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner pointed out that the debate represented "different schools of Freethought and was for many years copiously quoted, especially by persons opposed to every view of Freethought, who would confound representatives of one school by quoting opinions taken from the other". Roughly, Holyoake maintained that "the principles of Secularism do not include atheism", and, "secular criticism does not involve scepticism".

Though the word Atheist, as perhaps now, was often a term of opprobrium, Bradlaugh deliberately used it.

For him it was a clear statement of his opinion on "God". It is not therefore surprising that he maintained that secularism, rightly understood, must inevitably result in atheism and, in the debate, he put this with his usual powerful eloquence. Holyoake declared that the "imputation that secularism involved atheism 'was the greatest impediment in the way of national secular education'". Secularism was, he said, "a new form of freethought", independent of atheism or theism. But was it so in fact? Was not secularism, even as defined by Holyoake, devoid of all contact with religion! Interests in "secular" activities only, with no religious faith or belief was really atheism—it was being "without God".

Holyoake put his case, as he thought, very convincingly; but in the ultimate, it was Bradlaugh's arguments which prevailed. And though he had invented the term, Holyoake eventually gave up calling himself a Secularist and preferred to be known as an Agnostic. Both disputants had, whether they wanted to do so or not, to discuss the Bible and Christianity, and it is as well to see how Holyoake felt about them and secularism. He said:

Secularism is not an argument against Christianity it is one independent of it. It does not question the pretensions of Christianity, it advances others. Secularism does not say there is no light or guidance elsewhere, but maintains that there is light and guidance in secular truth . . .

If I remember aright, Holyoake's one-time opponent, the Rev. Brewin Grant—their two debates on Christianity and secularism can still be read with great profit—would have liked to call himself a Christian Secularist; so that we can see that he at least did not really object to the term as defined by Holyoake. But the majority of Secularists sided with Bradlaugh. Secularism must inevitably lead to Atheism, however one might deny it. A Secularist was an Atheist willy-nilly.

But words change in meaning in the course of time, and no doubt the present generation of Freethinkers, the descendants of Secularists, would prefer the word "humanism" as better representing their beliefs. Of course they have every right to prefer it. But I have never exactly found out why they do so.

"Humanism" is an old word. No doubt it can be argued that it has the same meaning as Holyoake's secularism, but it can be used to define Christianity as well. For after all, the teachings of Jesus mostly refer to the way one must live in this world. And Erasmus has been aptly called a Humanist. But what exactly is wrong with "secularism?" Does it conjure up the "artisans", the "mechanics", the "working men", who called themselves Secularists, and formed, perhaps, the largest part of the

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The Last Post

By GEORGE S. GOODMAN

(Continued from page 226)

TO RECAPITULATE and clarify: the New Testament falsifiers altered all the writings or "letters" of Paul, so that they should contain plenty of words, phrases and sentences confirming doctrines which were only concocted three to five centuries *after* Paul's death!

In the light of this, all references to a "redeemer" or a "gospel of Christ", and phrases like "God's Son Jesus Christ our Lord", "Christ died for us", or "through Jesus Christ our Lord" or "in Christ Jesus", "body and blood of the Lord", and so on, are nothing but the drivel Catholicism intended for devotees, in order to produce mass-hysteria; to bludgeon them into docile submission and to stifle all and every doubt or criticism under threat of excommunication!

At no time did Paul preach the sophistries and absurdities of orthodox Christianity, for Paul himself says that he was indebted to the Greeks for their wisdom; and what he expounds in that 15th Chapter to the Corinthians entirely coincides with ideas expressed in Plato's *Timaeus*.

The "brethren" to whom he was writing were *not* Christians, but Hellenic Jews and proselytes who would be quite able to understand his reference to the prevailing Jewish custom of blowing the ritualistic ram's horn at the passing of a co-religionist at his deathbed.

What Paul wanted to make clear was that, according to ideas prevalent at the time in which he was living, a man was credited with changing from a mortal to an "immortal being" within a second of his death.

That is the underlying reason why, first, the Roman Catholic Church (and then all other denominations following the Catholic lead) selected the 15th Chapter of First Corinthians as being most suitable for the funeral service.

However, it *had* to be altered, in order to imply a *future* "resurrection day" with an archangel (Gabriel) blowing a trumpet and, after that, his opening, by remote control, all the graves of "believers" — but leaving the skeletons of wicked unbelievers in their dark graves to further rot away, without the solace of meeting their "saviour and redeemer" and, perhaps, receiving an MBE (Most Believing Elders) and being allowed to sit on the right side of him, together with the goats.

It is, perhaps, not universally known that not only Roman Catholics, but also Anglicans and students of other denominations, are obliged to buy only those dictionaries and reference books that are "approved" by their authorities. In other words, it is made most difficult for them to find out the unlimited misleading statements of their superiors.

Thus, if the Hebrew word "Sho'far" was, ages ago, translated as "trump" and not as "ram's horn", the student would be prevented from stumbling to the true and rational explanation and would, for the rest of his life, still harbour the old indoctrinated orthodox falsehoods.

In the days of Paul, the secrets of the highly cultured Gnostics (the word means "knowers") were only imparted to privileged groups. What gave the impetus to the spread of Christianity in the 3rd and 4th century? In the main, it was the popular resentment and hostility of the uneducated masses against the "exclusiveness" of those groups of cultured Gnostics.

As a matter of expediency and in order to gain

adherents, the early Church fathers gradually corrupted the profound philosophies of the Greeks and reduced the sublime teachings of those giants of intellect to the vulgar level of the adherents of the, then, newly manufactured creed. The latter's main attraction was the inclusion of an "instant-saviour" as a means of escape from the plebs' lowly economic lot and also, because the masses wanted a political liberator who, together with a religious message, would give them a utopian regime in world affairs.

In order to come back to the funeral service with its blowing of a ram's horn, we have to skip over a great number of centuries and see what happened to the Jews in Byzantium, Greece, Macedonia and other districts when Christian intolerance drove them out.

When Christian intolerance drove the Jews out of the Holy Roman Empire, the Moors in Hispania offered them refuge and freedom from religious persecution. This was an astute move for, in complete collaboration with the artistic Moors, the highly cultured refugees from Greece and the Balkans, turned the Spanish peninsula into one of the most advanced countries in Europe. The arts, sciences and industry flourished there as nowhere else and, even today, the remains of Moorish architecture are still a delight to tourists visiting Spain.

Those Jewish refugees from Greece, the Balkans and Asia Minor were the descendants of the "brethren" to whom Paul wrote his letters and, quite naturally, they retained the same burial customs as their ancestors in the above countries.

Alas, though, the wheel of fate turned once more; Spain and Portugal were gradually conquered by Christian emperors, and ecclesiastical overbearance degenerated into terrorism of the worst kind. Religious mania instituted the Inquisition, and people were tortured into confessions of "crimes" which they had never committed. Non-Catholics were forced to be baptised or to leave the country.

Many Jews fled to Holland and England, where they founded separate communities which differed greatly from the Ashkenasis or "Westerners", the German, Polish and Russian Jews. The Spanish-Portuguese Jews are called Sephardim ("sephar" means book); in other words they were the "book-people" or studious men, and there is no doubt that they are highly cultured and still retain a certain grandeur and refinement, reminiscent of an illustrious past.

In the days of Paul, the ram's horn was blown when a man died, as a kind of farewell. Nowadays, this honour is reserved for the funeral of a rabbi of the Spanish-Portuguese congregation, and the short fanfare is blown at the graveside and not in the death-chamber, as in Paul's day.

It will now be clear that the Christian Church turned this simple ceremony into one of the most senseless dogmas in her rather formidable catalogue of pious deceptions.

The uneducated masses who had no access to books and, in any case, could not read or write, were told that there would be a corporeal "resurrection-day" in a dim and distant future when a mystical Christ and Saviour would judge them.

It is truly amazing what constant propaganda and brainwashing can do, for even in our very much more enlightened days, millions of church-people accept such a puerile doctrine which, if it had been recounted in *Gulliver's*

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This Believing World

A SPECIAL stamp has been designed to mark the centenary of the founding of the Salvation Army, and it will soon let the world know how highly honoured is its religion of "Blood and Fire" in England. Or perhaps, it is not its childish view of Christianity (which has generally been derided by the Establishment) but its "social services", and its capacity for money-making on sound business lines. We can however give it some credit for dealing with poverty and misery where most other organisations have failed.

★

ALL THE same, the picture drawn for us of the Salvation Army at work with the down-and-outs by the late George Orwell in his *Down and Out in Paris and London*, is not one which it would like to perpetuate, or one which TV and radio would care to dramatise. Orwell claimed that Salvation Army shelters, though clean, were far drearier than the worst of the common lodging houses, which were themselves pretty awful. Orwell's 1984 was given world-wide publicity but not many people know that he wrote about the "Army". It would never do to publicise his terrible picture of religion and social service mixing in the name of "our blessed Lord".

★

NOT ALL faith or spirit healing comes from Spiritualists. For example, the *People* (4/7/65) gives us particulars of the case of a Mrs. Pike who was blind, and had to walk with a stick. Hospitals could not help her; her case was "hopeless"; so eventually she went to a service held by the Divine Religious Healers, and "knelt before a faith-healing minister and prayed". On opening her eyes, "she could see". The Rev. A. Tee of the Elim Church remembered her case well. One of his ministers simply put his hands on Mrs. Pike, and prayed with her, and (Mr. Tee added), "we were privileged to witness one of God's miracles". What a pity it is that God has not cured more of the many millions of other blind people in the world.

★

SO, AFTER all, Professor Fred Hoyle who as an astronomer and physicist, made mincemeat of the Bible's account of Creation, and who threatened to leave England if he was not given a special institute for his work, has got what he wanted! From it, he will be able to continue his work in demolishing religion and advancing Freethought—though he may not call it that. His "steady state" theory of "continuous creation" has no need at all for God. Yet our bishops and priests cling to the primitive idea, and our Members of Parliament argue that children should—for their own good—be taught the dear old faith of their fathers.

★

AFTER all the ballyhoo about not blaming the modern Jews as it always did the ancient Jews, for the crucifixion of Jesus, the Vatican has "shelved" the "not guilty" verdict altogether (*The Observer*, 20/6/65). After all every Christian in history really believed Jews, ancient and modern, are guilty, and such belief simply cannot be shelved. After Bishop Carli of Segni, affirmed "the collective responsibility of the Jewish people, past and present, for the Crucifixion of Christ", what else could the Vatican do? And so long as people stick to the New Testament story, so long will Jews be blamed for the crucifixion.

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WHY NOT SECULARISM?

(Concluded from page 234)

members of the National Secular Society? Does secularism conjure up a quite out-of-date attack on the Bible and Christianity?

If anybody imagines that Bradlaugh and Holyoake as well as many of their followers were unable to attack "Holy Writ" except by ignorant abuse, he should read what they said, and how they debated. Bradlaugh must have spent many years in compiling his *Genesis* which, it may surprise those who know him by name only, and have never read him, is a work of genuine scholarship and painstaking research. They should read the two debates Holyoake had with Brewin Grant, and if they are philosophically minded, read the debates Bradlaugh held with the Rev. W. M. Westerby—regarded as his best by J. M. Robertson—and with W. R. Browne, MA on "Miracles". And here is the opinion of Professor Flint in his book *Anti-Theistic Theories*:

There is an impression in some quarters that Atheism is advocated in a weak or unskilful manner by the chiefs of Secularism. It is an impression which I do not share. Most of the writers who are striving to diffuse Atheism in literary circles are not to be compared in intellectual strength with either Mr. Holyoake or Mr. Bradlaugh.

Why, I repeat should we change the word "secularism"? Next year is the National Secular Society's centenary, and we want to show how solidly behind the word we still are. As a veteran of the movement, I not only see no necessity for any change, but am proud still to be an active Secularist.

THE LAST POST

(Concluded from page 235)

Travels, would have been dismissed with a smile.

But, because it is chanted by a long-faced cleric, sporting a outsize cross dangling from an immense chain, it is uncritically accepted, such acceptance being mainly determined by mental laziness and crass ignorance.

For, if people would only use their brains for a few minutes, they would immediately realise how much such an unnatural act would be in direct opposition to physical laws.

We know now that the deliberately mistranslated "last trump" was a weekly, historical occurrence in Paul's days, quite on a par to our "Last Post" at military funerals. And in the Church's game of dogmatical trickery, it has turned out to be not a "trump", but a card-sharper's fake.

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OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD. (Tower Hill), Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY. Every Friday, 8 p.m.: L. EBURY and J. A. MILLAR.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, July 25th, 6.45 p.m.: T. DAWES SMITH, "The World's Greatest Deception".

Notes and News

A SAD letter from John Shephard, founder of the Sunday Freedom League, informs us that he must temporarily suspend his anti-LDOS activities, because of a serious accident to his son and helper, David, needing a delicate operation to the brain. When Mr. Shephard wrote (on July 11th), David had been unconscious for a week and was still gravely ill, but there had been a slight improvement in his condition. And Mr. Shephard records "how wonderful people have been to my wife and me . . . giving us courage to face this ordeal, proving what humanism can do in times of trial and crisis, and illustrating that mankind is, at rock bottom, good and kind". Mr. Shephard also says lightheartedly that he can hear the cheers from some of our readers that they may not hear from him for a while. We know that we speak for all our readers in expressing our sympathy to Mr. Shephard and our hopes for his son's recovery. We look forward to their return to our pages.

★

"IF IT were not for what they discover about the Christian faith in our schools, most growing boys would know precious little about it", wrote the Rev. John Chicken, Vicar of St. Paul's, Whitley Bay, in the Newcastle *Evening Chronicle* (14/6/65). And there were, he went on, "strong vocal groups" who wanted to see a completely "secular pattern of education" in this country; they wanted to do away with morning prayers and to see the teaching of the Christian "truths" removed from school timetables. This obviously presented an awful prospect for a conscientious clergyman like Mr. Chicken: what hope would there be

for his religion if it were missing from school as well as home? Fortunately, a suitable report is to hand—that of the National Society, a body established 154 years ago in the Church of England for the promotion of religious education. It finds there is little public demand for a change.

★

TO GIVE him his due, Mr. Chicken tried to be fair. The lack of public demand may, he admitted, be no more than "an expression of a generally held apathy about religion". We agree with him—and the report—that it is more probable that the majority of parents want their children to be brought up in "an atmosphere where Christianity is presented as a way of life". The false identification of Christianity and morality is, as we all know, extremely hard to eradicate. It is also hard for a Christian vicar to be fair on the subject of R.I. Children should be free to accept or reject Christianity, "later on", said Mr. Chicken, "but in their formative years at school they should be so educated that they have a proper basis on which to make their own decisions". And, he added, we should see that they continue "to enjoy their right to learn about the truths of the Christian religion". By indoctrination in their "formative years!"

★

Two interesting snippets caught our eye in the first episode of Arthur M. Schlesinger's memoirs of President Kennedy in the *Sunday Times* (11/7/65). Before the presidential election, someone phoned on behalf of a Knights of Columbus bowling team. Kennedy, who didn't answer the phone, whispered, "Tell them I've gone out. If I don't have their votes, I might as well give up". On another occasion, he spoke at Cardinal Spellman's Al Smith dinner. The audience had been strongly pro-Nixon, and Kennedy was ironically entertained, we are told, by "the fact that the wealthy Catholics obviously preferred a conservative Quaker to a liberal of their own faith". It all goes to show, the future President commented, "that when the chips are down money counts more than religion".

★

THE growth of the German Humanist Union—under the direction of Gerhard Szczesny, author of *The Future of Unbelief*—has Christian leaders worried, the *Catholic Herald* reported (9/7/65). The Union, "an organisation of intellectual atheists", is "growing day by day", and it is finding most of its followers among "students, artists and professors". It was concentrating on intellectuals, said a Franciscan priest, Father Tupec, so that "eventually it would be able to spread its influence among all citizens". The Union has strongly opposed a concordat on education drawn up this year between the Holy See and the German state of Lower Saxony. While most Germans are Catholic or Protestant in name, a lot of them have left the churches. Isn't it unfair, Szczesny asks, that Christian Churches have influence and prestige far beyond their due? "They receive tax exemptions. They are supported by the government. Their officials sit on nearly all government censorship boards. In the world they command great power, but inside they are weak, shorn of members".

★

THE JULY anniversary story in the *Bolton Evening News* on July 3rd, was the Tennessee "Monkey Trial", which took place on July 10th, 1925. "The great trial began—science v. the Bible", the paper headlined. "Would progress win?" it asked. Today, 40 years after the trial, Tennessee still has not repealed its notorious anti-evolution law, a classic example, as the *Evening News* remarked, of "the curtain of dogma being drawn across the window of science".

Souls in Conflict

A SHORT STORY

By P. BULLOUGH

"HE WHO would find his soul must first of all lose it", said the Gnome with the long white beard.

"Surely this is some kind of game, is it not?" asked the Brown Cow, flicking away the flies with her tail. "Why should he want to lose it in the first place merely in order to perhaps experience the pleasure of finding it again. Come to think of it, he wouldn't experience any pleasure at all if he knew that it wasn't really lost in the first place".

"A perfectly logical consideration too, if I may say so", said the Owl. "There is the essence of simplicity in your observation my friend: providing of course that one considers one's soul in the light of one's bowler hat or artificial dentures".

"That is all very well", said the Mechanical Hare, running around in circles and flapping his ears in exasperation. "How is it possible to lose something that no-one can define in the first place? What is a soul in the light of modern scientific thought, this is what I would like to know?"

"That is a question that is easily answered", barked the Walrus, majestically. "One has merely to study the teachings of Christian faith in order to see clearly that the soul of man is the form of man in his 'after-life', and in order to find perfection of the soul in the 'after-life', he must of necessity spend the whole of his earthly existence in preparing for the advent of perfection by denying all claim to earthly material things".

"Balderdash!, Fiddlesticks and poppycock", shouted the Mechanical Hare; sniffing furiously. "Nothing but unqualified mystical humbug, and self-hypnotic escapism from the complications of reality. Anybody with any imagination and scientific knowledge at all must know that there cannot possibly be an 'after-life!' any such possible existence has been discredited by the invention and use of the revolutionary electronic soul-detecting machine. Perhaps one or other of you have heard tell of it?"

"Come to think of it, I do remember reading something concerned with the workings of such a machine as this in the *TT Times*", said the Brown Cow, rubbing her hide against the side of a tree. "Wasn't the machine being used by the Psychic Research investigators in their work on the detection of the soul at the moment of the death of the human body?"

"Yes, that's right! The results of the investigation prove beyond any shadow of doubt that there is no evacuation of any description from a body at the time of death. This goes to prove my theory that belief in the existence of an 'after-life' is merely superstition, and the outcome of ignorance", replied the Mechanical Hare jubilantly.

"Sacrilège!" bellowed the Walrus, drawing himself to his full height of seven feet, six and a half inches; his moustache bristling with indignation. "A fig for your scientific methods and investigations! How dare you suggest that this infernal contraption is the be-all and end-all of soul detection. These tests you speak of prove nothing outside of the ignorance of the people who undertake the investigations". Muttering to himself angrily the Walrus sat down on a large stone and looked at the Gnome for approval.

It is, however, the Owl who breaks the short embarrassing silence that follows the emotional outburst of the

Walrus. "Come! Come! my friends; let us not lose ourselves in the wilderness of emotional egotism in the search for the truth concerning our souls. The wilderness of egotism is a barren place compared to the garden of humility in the search for truth: therefore let us seek in the place more likely to provide the seeds of truth".

"Doubtless you mean well even though you do speak in riddles, dear Owl", said the Brown Cow. "The seeds of truth as I see them aren't found in a wilderness either, but I often find them on the trees in the farmer's garden when he is out of the way. There's nothing like a juicy apple to buck you up when you're feeling a bit under the weather and that's the truth as I see it: but please don't tell the farmer about me will you!"

"Capital! Capital! There is indeed the essence of simplicity in your philosophy, my uncomplicated friend", said the Gnome with the long white beard, giving a deep chuckle. "Even though it was not my intention to create such a controversy among you when I was merely reflecting upon the subject of 'souls' at the start of these proceedings, I think you will all agree that we have all learned a little something about science and humanism in the process".

"I for one cannot agree to having learned anything", snorted the Walrus. "I certainly don't follow your association of science and humanism. To my mind there is no connection at all between the two: the gulf is as wide as chalk and cheese".

"Corn and peas!" said the Brown Cow, dreamily licking the bark of a fallen log. "I love peas: especially the farmer's. I remember the last time I was in the garden among the vegetables when the farmer was away at market. I . . ." "Shut up and go back to sleep", broke in the Mechanical Hare irritably. "This is a very serious discussion and we haven't got time to waste on inane chatter".

"There is a great deal of truth in what you say, dear Walrus. There is indeed a gulf between the phenomena of science and humanism", said the Owl, chewing away at a piece of straw. "The gulf that separates the two would appear to exist only in the minds of men. We see in the mass of mankind an ignorance of either one or other of the two subjects. We have on the one hand, invariably; a scientist who knows next to nothing of humanism; and on the other a humanist who knows next to nothing of science. This is of course, not forgetting the majority of people who know nothing of either one or the other" . . . "I put it to you my friends: where is the man qualified in both the understanding of science and humanism? Any one man with such knowledge does not belong among mortals and can be found nowhere in a universe within the bounds of mankind".

"I don't agree. One such man was born on this earth nearly two thousand years ago; born the son of God and the keeper of souls", reverently replied the Walrus. "This man knew all things and laid down a code of living for all humanity to follow in order that each man may save his soul in the life hereafter".

"Nonsense", said the Mechanical Hare. "This son of God, whom you so emotionally describe, with a true knowledge of all things in the universe in all its inestimable complexity; was none other than an outstanding intellectual with a vision far removed from the normal and a

desire for the idealistic understanding of the human being by the human being. His theories were far removed from actual realism in his own generation, or any other generation for that matter. In fact, they were rationally impossible in any perceivable sphere of time".

"True! True!" said the Gnome quietly. "Where a theorist such as yourself is merely dealing with science and technology the time-lag between theory and practical reality is comparatively negligible when measured against the time-lag that is envisaged in the changes in the mass of humanity from the jungle state of ethics to the utopian state of 'universal brotherhood of man!' So far as human understanding is concerned, the Siamese twins among humanity are really the only two persons with anything in common with regard to mutual understanding, and until the whole of humanity become as one with the Siamese twins there can be no humanitarian utopia. This is, of course, a measure for all conceivable time as our friend the Hare so rightly points out" . . . "A double yolked egg is a much more intimate fruit than two single yolked ones, but I cannot imagine any hen laying all her yolks in the same shell".

"A very good analogy too, if I may say so", said the Owl. "It is easy to see that the measure of advancement in any particular field is proportional to the understanding of the advance by the mass".

"Aren't we wandering away from the original point in question? If my memory serves me correctly that point concerned the 'soul of man'", mumbled the Brown Cow, reaching up to pull down an acorn.

"Ah yes! Of course! A most appropriate observation too", said the Owl, hooting his approval. "We appear to have started well along the highway of 'souls' and lost our way at the cross-roads of philosophy and mass psychology".

"I'm not surprised!" growled the Mechanical Hare, his nose twitching with anger and his eyes changing colour like traffic lights. "No wonder we've lost the point in question. What else can we expect when our moronic friend the Brown Cow is chasing around the farmer's orchard filling her stomach all the time, and our pseudo-humanitarian comrade with the moustache is trying to lead us up the garden path alongside his own hypnotised mind. It's enough to cause a Hare to turn over in his time-cycles and destroy his computer".

"How dare you Sir! I . . .", the Walrus splutters, sneezes, changes three shades of purple and sits down with a bump beside the Brown Cow. "I . . . words fail me . . . Damn your impertinence Sir!"

"Now! Now! Now! take it easy! Steady now! watch your blood pressure", said the Brown Cow, turning around and rubbing her nose gently over the head of the Walrus. "I'm sure the Hare didn't really mean to upset you like this. What he says doesn't mean a thing to me, I'm far too ignorant to know anything about souls anyway. Ah! that reminds me . . . I wonder what my friend Daisy did with those pieces of fish she found in the barn last night? I hope she hasn't eaten them all: I must go and find out". So saying, the Brown Cow wanders away vaguely in the direction of the barn-yard.

"Well! Well! Dear me! We have indeed learned quite a lot about science and humanism since we started out in search for souls", said the Owl.

"Yes! We do at least come to the conclusion that the emotions and reasoning qualities of our sanctimonious friend the Walrus are of different value from those of our mechanical friend the Hare: neither lending themselves to a co-ordinated effort in the search for the truth about souls. The sanctimonious cog doesn't fit into the mechani-

cal wheel, so to speak. And yet! Come to think of it; each is an essential cog in the wheel of time", replied the Gnome.

"That's it! The wheel of time!" screeched the Owl, jumping up and down and flapping his wings with excitement. "The wheel of time is the reference point in the study of both science and humanism. Science cannot be studied separately without at the same time studying humanism if we are to get a clear picture of the two; and our knowledge of both is proportional to the natural speed of revolution of the wheel of time. The inability to realise this prime factor is the root of our trouble".

"Perhaps we have also discovered the true definition of 'soul' into the bargain", replied the Gnome, thoughtfully stroking his whiskers. "Could it possibly be that 'self' and 'soul' are one and the same thing: and in order to find our souls in this context we must first of all look for their rightful place in the scheme of *all* things that are knowable to mankind? In this way we *lose* our souls in the first place, and then find them again in their *true* perspective as a very small and unimportant part of the transcending scheme of things as a whole". Turns to the Owl. "The whole theory being 'relative to time' of course, my very dear friend".

And peace and quite reigned once again around the old oak tree at the far end of the orchard.

POAU APPEALS FOR SUPPORT

In a letter dated June 1st, appealing for support, POAU (Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State) reminds us that:

"Catholics are taking advantage of the war on poverty to bolster meagre administrative staffs at their schools". That's what the Evansville, Indiana *Press* said March 10th, and that's about right. The Kansas City *Star*, March 9th, announced that daily vacation schools would be run in Guadalupe, Annunciation-St. Vincent and St. Aloysius parishes July 5th at the expense of the Federal Government. These missions of the Church will be supported by taxpayers. This is the aid-to-parish programme now contemplated in Chicago, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Philadelphia, New Haven and El Paso, as well as Kansas City and Evansville.

Here is a new threat to church-state separation. Obviously, we must challenge the constitutionality of such expenditures. Our lawyers are studying three situations.

The struggle continues on other fronts. We have gone to trial in Mercer County, Ohio. We have lost the first round in *Horace Mann v. Tawes*. (We are substantial supporters of this Maryland case which is marked for the US Supreme Court). We are ready to file in Colorado.

In seven states we have been in the press, on TV and radio, in public and church meetings, seeking to counter clerical pressures for public funds. Critical states have been Ohio, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Iowa, Indiana, Minnesota and counties of Maryland.

The letter is signed by Glenn L. Archer, the Executive Director of POAU.

CORRESPONDENCE

JOSEPHUS AND JESUS

I do wish Mr. Goodman would not present opinions as mine which are not. He writes (THE FREETHINKER, June 18th): "I should like to point out that no scholar of any standing has ever doubted that the passage in Josephus is an *interpolation* . . .". Will Mr. Goodman kindly show me at what point in my letter published May 28th, I state that the passage is not an interpolation? If he refers back he will find that I was drawing attention to a point made by another writer in the same issue of THE FREETHINKER that contained his article. The writer in question, F. A. Ridley, conceded that Josephus did refer to Jesus.

The important point about Josephus is not whether the passage is an interpolation but that one appears—in fact there are two passages the second not being disputed by historians "of any standing". Georges Ory in his pamphlet *An Analysis of Christian Origins* states that "both these [references] are interpolations". He does not give any documentation for the statement, perhaps this suggests a degree of uncertainty in particular with the second passage. Herbert Cutner in his book *Jesus—God, Man or Myth?* rejects both passages (pp.103-106), but his reasons for doing so

lack conviction in that he states it is an interpolation in both cases (without much if any documentation) and thus indirectly presents it as evidence for the historicity rather than against. Indeed the same author on page 3 of the work referred to all but admits that behind the Gospels there is an historic figure. Joseph McCabe, another leading Secularist historian, makes no bones in his little work *Did Jesus Ever Exist?* as to the historicity of Jesus. McCabe referring to the disputed passage in Josephus, writes (p.36): "It seems to me not unlikely that he [the author of the passage as it now stands] found there a reference to Jesus . . .". Another Rationalist, the late Archibald Robertson, in his book *The Origins of Christianity*, is also an out and out historicist in that he argues in favour of a passage in Josephus and in relation to the second passage states that it "may be genuine". Genuine be it noted as it stands.

I have extended the above point to impress on Mr. Goodman that I do not dispute that the main passage in Josephus is an interpolation; what I do assert is that *there was a passage* and that the second passage must also be considered, and that there are not textual grounds for rejecting it. I look forward to Mr. Goodman's article on Josephus, though I suspect I know his points in advance. In conclusion I would like to draw his attention to two other writers, both Secularists. Dr. M. A. Larson in his massive recent work *The Religion of the Occident*, London, 1960, bluntly states on page 306 that the passage in Josephus on James and Jesus is genuine, while F. H. Amphlett Micklewright in the concluding passage of his most interesting book *Catholicism and the Need for Revolution*, refers to ". . . the central fact of world history", as being "the Word became flesh".

(Rev.) C. STROTHER, FAES,
Secretary, The Saint Osmund Society.

NEW MORALITY OR NONE AT ALL

I am grateful to Mrs. Ebury for her compliments, but I do not know what she is complaining about. We seem to be in complete agreement on all points! In fact if Mrs. Ebury does me the favour of rereading my article, she will see that my arguments can be boiled down to three main propositions:—

1. Unwanted babies—real live ones that bawl and leak, as well as metaphorical ones—are a tragedy. This is so both for their own sakes and for the lives of student parents who have yet to make their way.

2. Some students in our universities are having unwanted babies, and reactionary Christians are trying to impress the idea on an important Commission that this is because the students have rejected "Christian" morality.

3. Not having unwanted babies is merely common sense (*pace* Lord Chorley) and what the Christian Churches have called their morality is nothing else than everybody's—yours and mine, Gillian Hawtin's and Mrs. Ebury's—common sense. Morality is common sense, I want morality taken away from the Churches and given back to the people, shorn of dogmatism.

Don't call me a Reverent Humanist, Mrs. Ebury. I claim to be humane, but am utterly irreverent. What I said was that clean, simple, decent living is completely possible without any form of Christian morality.

I happen to like babies—in families and born of stable marital relationships. What concerns me, and it should be concerning all Freethinkers, is that students in Oxford and elsewhere, don't know enough about birth-control methods and are begetting children before they can form such stable marital unions. I was merely concerned that the only "evidence" on the matter should come from the other side, and amounts to a cock and bull story that "loose" behaviour is to be equated with rejection of supernatural religion.

My article was written to rebut this, and to try to prove the opposite. Perhaps it would have done more good if I had written to the Frank's Commission direct. I am certain it would do good if Atheists, instead of attacking each other, were to complain to the commission along these lines, and to do a bit of counter-propaganda among the students.

GILLIAN HAWTIN

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NCCL

Your correspondent, W. R. Nicholson (2/7/65) objects to the NCCL and CND getting any publicity in *THE FREETHINKER*. The first is primarily concerned with injustices affecting individuals—even atheists! The second is concerned to alert public opinion against the possession and threat of nuclear weapons. Surely everyone, with the possible exception of "God-fearing Atheists" and "priestly-minded libertarians", would support this object. I would ask Mr. Nicholson to remove the fetters from his "libertarian" mind which seems to be constricted within a very narrow circle of freedom of thought which he mistakes for atheism, and begin—he should have done it long ago—to inform himself of what is involved in being a Freethinker, secularist and atheist.

As intellectual exercises they have their limitations and confusions unless anchored to the positive ideas of social struggle to higher levels of civilised living—for all! In other words, politics! People like Mr. Nicholson, be they ever so iconoclastic and libertarian are more a menace to enlightenment than the religious people they so roundly condemn. I would ask him to consider that very few people think of God in the sky or anywhere else. It's a myth and as such carries little weight in reality. But the iconoclastic base on which it rests is something which, because it is reality, dominates individuals and society. It is rather ironical to witness the spectacle of many clergymen being more advanced in thought—on God and divinity—than your "atheistic" scribe who adds slander to his illiteracy by stating at the end of his silly effusion: "Which are as valueless as a trade unionist's signature".

Perhaps, Mr. Nicholson didn't need to work for his living, therefore, didn't need to be a trade unionist.

CHARLES DORAN.

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The Freethinker

Volume LXXXV—No. 31

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Price Sixpence

THE PAMPHLET of the Polish Socialist, Rosa Luxemburg, *Socialism and the Churches*, originally issued by a Left-Wing Socialist organisation in Ceylon, is now available in this country (Pioneer Book Service, 27 Thursley House, Holmewood Gardens, London, S.W.2, 1s. 6d.). Rosa Luxemburg (1870-1919) was a famous figure in the international Socialist movement of the pre-1914 era, simultaneously the stormy petrel of the radical Social Democracy of her day and a top-drawer Marxist theorist who wrote a *magnum opus* on *The Accumulation of Capital*, then and for long after regarded as a major contribution to Marxist economic theory. She was foully murdered by a gang of (pre-Hitler) Fascist thugs in January 1919 after assisting to found the German Communist Party.

Socialism and the Churches is interesting as the work of one of the finest brains to be found anywhere in the modern International Labour movement, and most certainly one could not possibly imagine a British Socialist of the present-day vintage writing it. (For that matter, Luxemburg would probably be as disappointed by the present-day German Social Democrats as Keir Hardie would surely be by the present-day Labour Party). But it must be stated that this particular pamphlet, though stimulating enough in its way, represents an agitational polemic against the reactionary clergy of her day, rather than a serious work of scholarship or research into the evolution of Christianity.

Kautsky

It has, accordingly, little if any permanent value as a serious critique of Christian origins and social evolution. In this respect, it does not even begin to compare with the major work of her Social Democratic colleague and party comrade, Karl Kautsky (1854-1938), whose *Foundations of Christianity* (which I reviewed some time ago in these columns) which remains a contribution of permanent intellectual value for the study of Christian origins, in particular as one would surely expect from a Marxist, on the sociological side.

In the intellectual tradition of Marxist theory, Rosa Luxemburg undoubtedly occupies a very high place, perhaps on an equality with Kautsky and only a few degrees below Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. But this well-deserved reputation must be held to be based upon her sociological works, in particular, upon her *magnum opus*, *The Accumulation of Capital*, and upon her slighter, but devastating attack upon German Imperialism in her *Junius Letter to the German Social Democracy* (1915).

Furthermore, though this could perhaps be more fittingly commemorated in a professedly Socialist journal rather than here, she will always be remembered (along with her fellow-martyr and workmate, Karl Liebknecht, as the inspirer of the heroic though abortive insurrection of the Spartacus-Bund in January 1919. This magnificent act of courage cost her her life but, had it only succeeded, would surely have saved Europe from Hitler and Germany

from her subsequent humiliating relapse into barbarism.

Socialism and the Churches presents a point of view that at first sight appears to have more in common with that of Christian Socialism than it does with that of the Marxist philosophy of historical materialism, on which in the political and economic spheres "Red Rosa" was such an erudite and eminent exponent. For here she addresses a polemic against the clergy, in particular the Polish clergy (Rosa Luxemburg was a Polish Jewess by origin) for their rapacity and political subservience to the then reactionary military autocracies of the German, Russian and Austrian Empires into which pre-1914 Poland was partitioned.

(The original edition of this pamphlet was published by the Polish Social Democratic Party in 1905). Here our author had an easy task for the subservience of both the Orthodox and Lutheran clergy to, respectively, Tsar and Kaiser, was notorious. "God bless the squire and his relations, and keep us in our proper stations", this feudalistic anthem represented the unvarying attitude of the Churches in imperial Germany, Austria and Russia.

The Acquisition of Riches

It made little difference whether they called themselves Lutheran (Germany), Orthodox (Russia), or Roman Catholic (Austria); all were pillars of their respective autocracies and of the still semi-feudal despotisms represented by the (pre-1914) regimes of Eastern Europe. On this aspect of the relations of socialism and the Churches Luxemburg writes sharply and effectively. She had, after all, an easy task in contrasting texts from the New Testament denouncing the acquisition of riches—written at a time when Christianity was still a struggling sect with a clientele of slaves and impoverished proletarians—with the wealth and luxury later acquired by the Churches of her own day, of which she gives some particularly glaring statistics. This represents a point of view with which many Christian Socialists from Charles Kingsley to, say, the present Bishop of Southwark would be in substantial agreement.

However, when our Socialist author cites communistic statements made by fathers of the Church like St. Basil or St. John Chrysostom (a particular favourite of Christian Socialists) and then goes on to reproach the modern Christian Churches for not living up to these idealistic exhortations, she really indicates a somewhat naive (and incidentally quite un-Marxist) approach to the whole problem of Christian evolution; one specially surprising for so eminent a Marxist philosopher, even in an admittedly popular pamphlet like this.

Christianity and Social Evolution

Socialism and the Churches is, we repeat, an excellent popular pamphlet and no doubt proved a most useful addition to the Social Democratic propaganda literature of the period. It is not at all surprising to learn that it has, since its author's death been reissued in Soviet Russia (1920) and France (1937) apart from the current English

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Socialism and the Churches

By F. A. RIDLEY

edition in both England and Ceylon.

However, even in a Socialist pamphlet written for popular reception, one would have normally expected, particularly from an author of the intellectual calibre of Rosa Luxemburg, at least some reference, if only in passing, to what is surely from any Socialist point of view, the basic problem presented by Christian evolution: how came it about that what began as (in part at least) a revolutionary messianic movement aiming at the violent overthrow of the Roman Empire and social order (as is transparently clear from what is probably its oldest extant scripture, the Apocalypse) eventually became transformed into the autocratic Church of Rome and Orthodox Churches, firmly allied with the traditional ruling classes in perpetuating the old social order based upon the exploitation of the masses. Karl Kautsky touches upon this crucial question for the sociologist, and in particular for the Socialist, in his *Foundations*, though its later developments were outside his period. A later Marxist author, Archibald Robertson, has lucidly surveyed these aspects of Christian social evolution, relating in particular to Christian origins and the Reformation, but Rosa Luxemburg scarcely refers to this central problem.

Back or Forward?

The fact of course is—and it should not be necessary to remind Marxists of this surely elementary deduction from the theory of historical materialism—Christianity, like every other historical movement, had willy-nilly to conform with the material conditions of its time, and with the current social evolution necessitated by them.

Socialism (at least in any recognisable modern sense) was not a viable way of life in any pre-industrial social order. The means of production cannot be commonly owned in say, an agrarian society. What the early Christians cited by Rosa Luxemburg—Tertullian, Chrysostom etc.—really advocated was not socialism (Christian or any other variety) but indiscriminate charity, whether actually dispensed by the Church or the state. Similarly, those Christian communist sects that undeniably existed, from the Donatists (4th century) via the Lollards (14th century) to the Anabaptists and Fifth Monarchy Men who gave so much trouble to both the pope and Luther at the Reformation, had no concrete plans for a Socialist order arising from the potentialities inherent in their own times. All that they could do was to hark back wistfully to the dim Golden Age in the long ago, to some Garden of Eden where (as the medieval Lollards significantly phrased it) Adam delved and Eve span. And where was then your gentleman? In the beginning where were your class distinctions? Modern, post-industrial socialism does not hark back to any such Garden of Eden where Jehovah “walked in the cool of the day”. Instead, it looks forward to the International Co-operative Commonwealth in which gods and ruling classes, divine and human exploiters, will both alike have walked simultaneously out of human history.

BAN ON DR. ROUX TO CONTINUE

THE South African Minister of Justice has refused the request of the Rationalist Association that Dr. Edward Roux should be allowed to continue as its active chairman. The Association's appeal was accompanied by a list of its speakers and lectures during 1963 and 1964, and attention was drawn to its non-political nature. The Association is convinced that the ban on Dr. Roux cannot possibly have been on the basis of anything said or done by him in his capacity as its chairman. For the present, however, Dr. Roux must remain Chairman in absentia.

Opus Dei

[This article is summarised by C. Bradlaugh Bonner from the July issue of *L'Idée Libre*, which took the information from *Espoir*, a weekly published at Toulouse by Spanish refugees].

On October 2nd, 1928 there was founded in Spain “The Sacerdotal Society of the Holy Cross and the Work of God”, since known as Opus Dei, by a priest, who has since become a bishop, José-Maria Escriva. The Society's members reunited after the civil war, and in 1943 received the approval of the Vatican, numbering among its members 12 cardinals, two patriarchs, 26 archbishops and 110 bishops. This papal approval was reinforced by a series of pontifical decrees, and was placed under the protection of Cardinal Teschini, one of the most powerful and reactionary of ecclesiastical potentates.

Opus Dei is constituted on the lines of the Jesuits. Its central office is in Rome and its Director for life is its founder, Monsignor Escriva. It differs from the Society of Jesus, however, in being largely secular in membership; and is divided into two sections, one for men, the other for women, independent save that both are responsible to the Director. According to the American weekly *Life* of March 18th, 1957, Opus Dei then had nearly 100,000 members in four grades, distributed in Spain, Germany, Ireland, Latin America, and Canada, and, then recently, in France. The first mentioned grade was the “numerarios”, drawn from university intellectuals; the second the “oblates” from all classes of society; the third the “super-numerarios”; and the last and most numerous—from whom is expected little more than regular pecuniary contributions—the “co-operadores”. It is claimed that many non-Catholics belong to this last group.

All members are bound to secrecy, as required by the decree of the Sacred Congregation of July 24th, 1947. From the rank of the “numerarios” a certain number are received each year into the priesthood, e.g. in 1955, 36 intellectuals from six different countries—doctors, lawyers, engineers, chemists etc. took orders. Most of these continue to exercise their profession. A somewhat similar organisation is the Jesuit “Templars”.

New members are sought with the greatest care and secrecy; and the main aim is to infiltrate into positions of influence in the universities, the liberal professions, particularly the civil service and education, as well as the armed forces and the police. Nor is finance forgotten. Radio-Luxemburg revealed that in 1926 two key posts in the Bank of Spain were held by members of Opus Dei, who also control banks such as Banco Popular (People's Bank) of Madrid and the Credito Andorra. Opus Dei also owns wholly or in part several newspapers, and controls more than one publishing house.

As has already been mentioned branches of Opus Dei are to be found in other countries than Spain. In France the society has been very active since 1952 especially in the universities and there particularly among the students; then in the army, in the publishing world and lastly in politics, e.g. Robert Schumann and others. Although its central offices are in Rome, the organisation is not so widely developed in Italy as in Spain. In Germany the centre is at the monastery of St. Maria Lach, which was also the centre of Adenauer's support. Among the thirty other countries in which this organisation is active we may note that centres have been established in the universities of London and Oxford. Although Opus Dei may be monarchist fascist in Spain, it may take other aspects in other lands.

Reflections on Credulity

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

MAGDALEN GOFFIN'S long essay, "Some reflections on superstition and credulity", in *Objections to Roman Catholicism*, is an extraordinary production, and it is little wonder that it has been lambasted alike by Atheists and by her fellow Catholics. It might well be sub-titled "*Credo quia absurdum*", for after she has picked Catholicism to the bones, it is difficult to see that she has any carcase left! When she takes as a basic proposition that men reject Catholicism not because of what it is, but because of what they think it is, she is, of course, merely uttering commonplace tactics of Catholic apologetics. Normally however, Catholic apologists proceed to explain where the erring heretic has got things out of focus. Magdalen Goffin's article is remarkable in that having recognised that men reject the Church because it invites us "to worship but a shrunken God", she then gives an account of its sheer follies and superstitions, e.g. the sale of indulgences, the Holy House of Loreto, exorcism, the rubrics of the sacraments, and even of such fundamental doctrines as baptism, hell, and the Real Presence, in such terms that we are left reeling and staggered as to how she could possibly do it and yet remain a Catholic. Finally, she makes the astonishing plea that "Rome should not be outlawed because she continues to sanction superstitions once part of the belief of every Christian, nor should she be sneered at because she tolerates credulity where it is a necessary accompaniment of any faith at all".

Faith, then, in whatever shape or form, is apparently so desirable (even when loaded with so many excrescences that to plain uncomplicated persons like ourselves it would seem utterly devoid of all attraction), that we are asked to hold fast to it at all costs. Protestants tried to purify Christianity of all this dross four centuries ago, and finally the more clear-sighted among us realised that none of it was worth clinging to.

Magdalen Goffin's arguments seem a lamentable climb down from the thundering authoritarianism of Rome of the Ages! Certainly one would prefer the ingenuity of Father Thurston, or the wit of Ronald Knox. She seems to think she has only to parody the famous remark of Margaret Fuller, "I accept all the difficulties", and they have been overcome! If Protestantism cleared itself of the tinsel at the Reformation, it seems high time that the One True Church did.

Yet, after all, has Magdalen Goffin apprehended a truth about it? Can it really do so? Is it showing any signs of doing so? The visitor to Lourdes, though he will undoubtedly find an air of tranquility within the Domaine of Masabielle, discovers stores as large as our biggest supermarkets, with a sickly array of miniature altar-cum-musical boxes, and thousands of pinchbeck medals and rosary beads of every price, size and hue.

Only a few weeks ago I found myself in Aylesford. There at least, in a restored Carmelite monastery, I expected serenity, and abstraction from "the things of this world". There was a field full of motor coaches, a crammed repository, and an ice-cream booth of proportions not unsuited to a seaside resort. Magdalen Goffin no doubt assumes that credulity and superstition are necessary human elements in a divine system and will die out. Perhaps Freethinkers also too readily assume they will die out, and that Chaucer's pardoner is a thing of the past, but some of us have not forgotten the "miracles" at Stockport in the early 1950s. We may better ask if such

charlatanism is not an essential ingredient of popular Catholicism, for people who otherwise would be entirely seduced by bingo, TV, dog-racing and what have you.

Magdalen Goffin is very bold to quote St. Paul that "by making the truth publicly known . . . we recommend ourselves to the honest judgment of mankind!" She suggests that modern Catholics should combine the attitudes of Voltaire—to dissolve with the acids of sarcasm human aspects of belief—and of St. John of the Cross—to keep one's intellect alive to the underlying truths. It is to be questioned whether Magdalen Goffin has not so well adopted the attitude of Voltaire as to leave little work for a St. John of the Cross! No Freethinker is likely to dispute her assertion that "superstition and credulity are, in their application, relative terms".

Certainly, it may be unfair to blame Abraham because he thought (a) God could be propitiated by human sacrifice, but this can only worry people who keep themselves within the context of Christianity. It is not going to worry Freethinkers. We have grown out of all this anyway. The core of the matter is exactly what she quotes from Dr. Johnson, that the fundamental objections to Roman Catholicism are objections to Christian orthodoxy. So she proceeds to take the doctrine of hell as a sort of test case, choosing this because, as J. S. Mill remarked, "compared with the doctrine of endless torment any other objection to Christianity sinks into insignificance". Roman Catholicism, she needlessly reminds us, has never relinquished it. As late as 1952, in *The Teaching of the Catholic Church*, Dr. Arendzen, a writer of weight, painted it in lurid tones worthy of Father Furniss. Magdalen Goffin states the doctrine, and she states the traditional apologetic for it—Rome's "recognition" of the annihilating effect of sin. But merely to state the doctrine is such-and-such, does not say that the matter is won. In fact, Magdalen Goffin suggests that theologians "making use of current imaginative and conceptual expressions . . . perverted it into an everlasting state of positive suffering". In suggesting this is a perversion it is at least open to question whether she can be said faithfully to render the teaching of her Church, and it is to say the least doubtful if she renders it a service.

Again, she quotes those words of Christ usually accepted as the scriptural authority for the sacrament of baptism: "Unless a man is born of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven". No one, she says, now takes these words literally. Do they not? Even if *extra ecclesia nulla salus* is commonly given a wider interpretation than its literal meaning, the present writer never heard the doctrine of baptism both preached from the pulpit, or accepted by laymen (of many different levels of education) during her years in the Catholic Church, except in a quite literal manner.

And it is all very well for Magdalen Goffin to complain that the Council of Florence perpetuated the "superstition that God punishes retributively". Is she so certain that this is not an idea in fact essential to the nature of Christianity? It really is far too facile a mode of debate to think that just because *she* has been so extremely "enlightened" as to recognise that all these difficulties exist, they are thus, somehow, automatically cleared up merely by the stating thereof! Freethinkers are of the opinion that too many, indeed all, of the "superstitions and credulities"

(Concluded on page 246)

This Believing World

SO RELIGIOUS teaching is at last being exposed, not by blatant infidels, but by eight university training college lecturers (*The Observer*, 11/7/65), who "have expressed growing concern about the apparent ineffectiveness of religious education in primary and secondary schools". Religious teachers are accused of giving "the Bible a type of validity and authority no longer accorded to it by educated Christians". This may be true, if we all understood what was meant by "educated" Christians. Are these not the backbone of religious speakers on TV and the radio? And how many of them clearly indicate that the Bible for them has no longer "validity and authority".

★

MOREOVER, it appears that a recent National Opinion Poll survey, published in *New Society*, "showed that an overwhelming majority of parents, irrespective of their own beliefs, want religious education for their children". And this came "both as a surprise and a relief to the various church organisations" which had been worried by "humanist propaganda". But in spite of this, "criticism by Christian educators" has been mounting. Useless "vandalism" and other crimes by children have steadily increased, so no wonder Christian educationists are worried. Christian teaching in schools has morally failed.

★

WHAT is the situation regarding unity between the Church of England and the Methodist Church? No sooner are we told that talks were going on divinely, than we are hastily informed that some hitch has occurred—which makes more talks absolutely necessary, for alas, even the Methodist Church itself is hopelessly divided. Nobody seems to know the "doctrinal" points on which either of the two Churches are agreed upon. At least we know where the Church of Rome stands in the Vatican, with "no surrender" as its motto. But where stands the Church of England and the Methodist Church? This is where we came in!

★

THE RURAL Dean of Manchester, Canon Green, claims that "unwed mothers are pampered" (*Sunday Mirror*, 20/6/65). They are "better looked after, more cosseted, and treated more kindly than married mothers", a statement which is surely nonsense. He is "perturbed by all the kindness lavished on the unmarried mother, and wonders if it is not misdirected". Most of us, especially if we are not Christians, are perturbed at the Canon's callousness. When the happy times come when a baby can be had at will, when there will be no slur on being a mother, it is possible there will be no Canon Greens to complain. In any case, it is as well to note that the Archdeacon of Northumberland does not agree with him.

★

NO SPIRITUALIST would ever give up his poltergeists, who pop up every so often, and in most cases are only ousted by Christian priests with "bell, book and candle", or some other equally divine mummery invented by the Christian Church at the height of its power. The *Sunday Mirror* (27/6/65) has been looking into the poltergeist who clung to an eleven-year-old schoolgirl, and the paper has not yet made up its mind whether the infernal imp is "hallucination, imagination, or trickery". Yet, it declares, "the haunting of young Virginia Campbell could be nothing but fact". This is on the authority of Dr. G. Owen of Trinity College, Cambridge, who is—we are told—"the world's leading authority on poltergeists".

★

DR. OWEN has written a book on the "problem" and,

though he has not seen Virginia's poltergeist himself, he is quite satisfied that the "witnesses" heard "actual noises", and saw "actual motions of real objects", and therefore could not be tricked. Dr. Owen is therefore now quite certain that there is "a physical force" around Virginia, "which is not yet known to science" but is presumably well known to Dr. Owen.

Questions Without Answers

DAVID TRIBE'S long poem, *Why Are We Here?* (Outposts Publications, 10s.), begins when the ocean mists seem to become a parboiled Venus or an aged cretin and innocence and peace dissolve into the parquetry of night and day while a human foetus floats on the waters of maternity. A human life is born, naked as the oyster-polished buttocks of a pearl. The poet then shows us the child as a drum skin waiting for the stick of life, and life, when it comes, as a confusion of beauty like the smell of jelly cooling in a window, and existence the pain of frustrated thoughts; and times when reality is seen to be the stimulation of susceptible senses, and times when the cloud shadows of gods are more real than the El Dorado joys on earth. In the end the knight's gentleness turns to gentility, and man's thoughts die and the crucifix of luck is death. This account of life is punctuated with choruses by "the flakes" of moods and emotions and appearances trying to summon themselves into a reasoned whole.

This is not perhaps an easy poem to read, for there are no surprises, no new thoughts, no intense condensations, no technical fireworks. One has to rely on the skilful formality of the presentation to realise that the poet is suggesting that life is question and answer death. Man must accept question as the essence of matter if he is to be, to build "the blessed bane of life"; for answers are negation and destruction. This, in fact, is not worked out explicitly; yet it is only when we grasp this formal theme that we can appreciate the apparent fatuity of some of the lines in the choruses which superficially are pantomime jingles. They are, actually, an underscoring of the absurdity of questioning "what is" when man should define "what is" as question.

Make no mistake, Mr. Tribe has many felicities. He can speak of "fields of wheat like fairground sand" and "houses framed in icicles and white honey-comb". Still, in the test of such an extended poem, he does lack self-censorship. Just as some of his pantheistic passages suggest a unitarian sermon, so do some of his words ("we canticulate", "the child palpates his way", etc.) propose the pompous parson when such an effect is not intended.

However, the whole sustained work is indeed an achievement, and no less so because one might have thought that such pieces are no longer being written today when poets are mainly concerned with complex and contradictory moods held in suspension by high electric-neural interchange. On one level one is reminded of the old nature poets who were content simply to describe; yet, as I have said, Mr. Tribe uses his simplicities to make a formal construction to undermine professional-paraclete profundities.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

WITHOUT COMMENT

St. Jude is the patron of helpless causes, or cases, which is why you see so many grateful thanks to him in the personal columns of the evening newspapers, particularly in the North-West, round about the time of the 11-plus results.

—NESTA ROBERTS, (*The Guardian*, 20/7/65)

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY. Every Friday, 8 p.m.: L. EBURY and J. A. MILLAR.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Portsmouth Humanist Society (Friends' Meeting House, 25 Northwood Road, Hilsea), Friday, July 30th, 7.30 p.m.: Discussion, "Humanists in the Nuclear Age".

Notes and News

WITH THE Labour Government—even with its slender majority—apparently determined to continue in office, the pollsters seem to have turned their attention from politics to religion. The latest study, conducted by Derek Wright, Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Leicester, entitled *Attitudes towards the Church in Wellingborough*, involved the questioning of as many as 66 subjects drawn from four different housing areas. Area 1 contained large detached houses, area 2 private semi-detached houses, area 3 a council estate, and area 4 old terraced houses. The sample was—we read in *New Society* (24/6/65)—46 per cent male and 54 per cent female; which means there were, in plain figures, 30 men and 36 women. Of these quite a large proportion, 41 per cent, had attended church as often as monthly or weekly. Which alone would suggest that Mr. Wright's sample was unrepresentative. But, of what possible use could figures be when based on such a tiny number of people?

★

"THERE IS a persistent failure in the West", wrote Edward Crankshaw in a book review (in the *Observer*, 18/7/65), "to understand the savagery of the war being waged by the Soviet Government on organised religion". Things are, he added, worse now than for some years past. "Monks and nuns have been driven out of their establishments at rifle point and left to starve or freeze in the forests: those who have sought to succour them intimidated or arrested". It was not clear whether Mr. Crankshaw was here drawing on the work under review, Michael Bourdeaux's *Opium of the People* (Faber, 30s.), "the explorations of a young Anglican priest looking for God in Russia and finding Him in unexpected places—and not finding Him, frequently, where He is said to be". Recent persecutions are the subject of only a very small part of

the book which "comes as near as any book can to answering in human terms the question: what is the state of religion in the Soviet Union today?"—a question which Mr. Crankshaw, as an agnostic, "found it hard to answer with conviction".

★

AN EXTENSIVE scheme is being planned—we read in the *Guardian* (19/7/65)—to banish the dark and gloomy effect introduced in the nineteenth century into Manchester Cathedral. There are no worries about the structure said the architect, Dr. R. B. Wood-Jones, but a great deal could be done to reflect a "sense of joy" essential in the Christian faith. The Cathedral dated back to the fifteenth century, but there had been a series of major restorations in the nineteenth century. The roofs were originally richly coloured, but this was later removed; an attempt was now being made "to bring the building into line with the modern concept of a cathedral—full of light and colour". But, as Dr. Wood-Jones must know, the real gloom of Manchester Cathedral derives not from its dull roof and bad lighting; nor will a few thousand more watts dispel it. The place is dead.

★

OUR colleague in This Believing World justifiably asks where the Anglican and Methodist Churches stand on unity: a rather complex question that we don't presume to answer. We can, however, add a footnote. Opponents in the Methodist Church to the proposed terms of reunion are reported to be "closing their ranks" (*The Guardian*, 20/7/65). A group of Lancashire Methodist ministers met in Preston on July 19th and issued a statement saying that it had decided to take its views to "a meeting more representative of the dissentient opinion in the whole of Great Britain". The Rev. K. Mackenzie, superintendent of the Morecambe Methodist circuit explained that some of the ministers wanted "clarification" of the new position concerning acceptance of the historical episcopacy. It would seem, then, that our TBW colleague isn't the only one who isn't clear about the position on unity.

★

ONE OF the curious results of the new US Federal programmes in education is, according to *Church and State* (July-Aug. 1965), "the functional interlocking of church and state which they foster". This is true of both the Economic Opportunity Act and the Elementary and Secular Education Act. All around the United States officials of the Roman Catholic Church are "seizing the reins of leadership" in the programmes. As Dr. Maurice M. Hartmann, director of Community Service put it, "The war on poverty coincides with the teaching of the Church". Now that the Federal Government is waging it, that is!

★

IT WAS reported in the same issue of *Church and State* that a new municipal judge in Los Angeles, Mary Elizabeth Waters, had refused to perform marriage ceremonies for Roman Catholic couples. A Catholic herself, Judge Waters has cited her Church's canon law that only a Catholic priest can perform a valid marriage ceremony for Catholics. Public law in California, however, provides for civil marriage and makes no exemption in the case of any religious denomination, and when Presiding Judge Francis A. Cochran heard of Judge Waters's refusal, he despatched another judge to take over in her place. "Judges should not allow religious beliefs to interfere with their duties", Judge Cochran said.

★

WE HAVE been asked by the publishers, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., to point out that the correct title of their Berdyaev anthology reviewed by F. H. Amphlett Micklewright (16/7/65) is *Christian Existentialism*.

The ABC of the Traditional Arguments for the Existence of God

By GONZALO QUIOGUE (Manila)

A. *The ontological argument.* St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) stated the argument: "God is Perfect Being and Perfect Reality. As such He exists, because existence is implied in perfection and is one of His basic traits. If He does not exist, He is not perfect. But since He is perfect, He must exist".

Comments: Immanuel Kant, the great German philosopher of the 18th century, was right in saying that "existence" is not a trait, because anything conceived by man exists either as a fact or as a figment of the imagination, or as an abstraction. The ontological argument wants to prove the existence of God by assuming that His existence is contained in His definition. If this argument is valid, we can logically say that a "perfect mountain" must exist, for the "same reason that existence is implied in perfection". Also, a perfect valley, a perfect lake, a perfect tree, etc. This argument claims logical necessity for its obvious absurdity.

B. *The cosmological argument.* This argument, simply stated, runs like this: Everything has a cause, and this cause is the effect of some other cause, and so on . . . until the series of cause and effect reaches the First Cause, God, the Uncaused Cause. A chair, a table and a house are here because a carpenter made them. Likewise the universe is here, because God created it. Nobody created God, because He is not a contingent being like you and me. Our existence depended upon God and our parents. Everything was caused by some other thing, except God, the Uncaused Cause.

Comments: Our conclusion that a carpenter made the table is the result of our daily experience. This cause-and-effect thinking in our daily life was erroneously applied by the theologian to the totality of the universe. He said the universe must have had a Maker for the same reason that a table had a maker. An infinite series of gods in regress, each made by the previous one, would look awkward. Hence, as a solution, a dogma was invented—the dogma that God is an Uncaused Cause or First Cause, an Unmade Maker and an Unmoved Mover. If someone will ask: Instead of inventing God behind the universe to explain the latter, why not regard the world of nature as the Uncaused Cause and the Unmade Maker? There are two explanations to this:

1. Sincere theologians and religionists, people who truly believe in the existence of God, must have a God. They feel good and they find relief and comfort in the thought of Him. The universe of nature is not a conscious

entity, not a sentient being. Hence there must be a personal God with Whom religionists may commune—to unburden themselves of their troubles and to ask for help that their fellow humans cannot give.

2. Insincere theologians and other cash-minded people who are giving top priority to the money-making activities of religion must maintain a steady God-belief among all religionists for obvious reasons.

The universe, like space, time, and quantity, has no beginning. The universe has always been here in continuous flux, in an ever-evolving pattern. The stars or suns and planets are being formed from time to time by the condensation of hydrogen gas and dust in the immensity of cosmic space. The planets are too relatively small to have enough mass and pressure to generate stellar heat—thus they become planets instead of suns or stars. And when a planet happens to be at the right distance from its sun, not too close and not too far, sunlight and age-long interactions among the planet's chemicals produce organic matter, first in the form of plants and then of animals.

C. *The design argument.* Briefly, this argument says that the order and wonder we see in nature and the universe show that there is a Supreme Intelligence at work in this world. Contemplate the orderly revolution of the nine planets around the sun without sideswiping each other. Consider the rotation of the earth on its axis every twenty-four hours and its revolution around the sun each year. Feast your eyes on the bright colours of falling autumn leaves. See the beautiful flowers in springtime and hear the sweet chirpings of birds as they fly through the cool fragrance of the season. All these were designed by the Good Lord for the enjoyment of His children.

Comments: To some extent there is order, wonder and beauty in nature. But this is only one half of the picture. The other half is terrible chaos. Where is the order and beauty in a big fish swallowing a little fish? A snake swallowing a mouse? A rapacious hawk tearing a pigeon to bits? A hungry lion's mouth clamped tightly on the throat of a struggling zebra?

Where is the order and harmony in nature in the terrific explosions of star-suns, in the eruptions of volcanoes, in great floods, tidal waves, typhoons, hurricanes, tornadoes and terrible earthquakes and pestilences that kill thousands of humans and animals? A religious person gazes lovingly at the order in nature that strengthens his religion, but looks away from the chaos that weakens such creed.

FREEDOM

A successful party politician and an unsuccessful independent candidate were arguing the subject of "success".

Party politician (exasperated): "You remind me of an egg without the 'little lion' nobody wants you!"

Independent (coolly): "Quite true!, my friend: but you must admit that the egg without the lion is very seldom addled: is far bigger and much more tasty, and the hen that lays it has much more freedom than her sister in the cage".

P. BULLOUGH.

REFLECTIONS ON CREDULITY

(Concluded from page 243)

of which she complains are an essential part and parcel of Catholicism, both historic and continuing. That is why they find it infinitely simpler to reject the whole lot, and, instead of wasting their mental energies on conundrums incapable of solution, expending their intellectual powers on building up a new world with their backs turned against a system of perplexities which has engaged the speculative intellect of mankind for two thousand years too long!

English and French Writers

By F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

THE DAY of the source book seems to be with us and to be making its impression in many subjects. Difficulties in a ready obtaining of the original writings make such books of use to the student, whilst lack of time goes far towards justifying a method of reading reliable extracts rather than the whole text. John Plamenatz has used this method to present the liberal tradition to English readers.

In *Readings from Liberal Writers, English and French* (Allen and Unwin Ltd., Minerva Series No. 13, 21s.), he commences with Locke, whose works upon civil government and upon toleration gathered up and detheologised the controversies of the seventeenth century, and thus laid the roots of an evolution in political and social democracy. Constitutionalism is represented by Montesquieu, whose *Spirit of the Laws* was an important work in the carrying over of jurisprudence into the same liberal, empirical framework. Constant, like Burke and Rousseau, affords a useful touchstone for liberalised opinion at the period of the American War of Independence and the French Revolution. Hume is representative of the carrying of empirical thought into further stages. Mill the rationalist and Lord Acton the liberal Catholic are excellent representatives of liberalised opinion in the mid-nineteenth century, whilst De Tocqueville's essay will always stand as the most important analysis of American democracy at the same period. Nor is it without relevance to find that the series of selections is rounded off by R. H. Tawney whose study, *Equality* was probably among the more important works to emerge from Fabian Socialism, and left its mark upon a great deal of socialistic thinking as it sought the development of a more equalitarian society.

At first sight, it might seem that there are marked differences between these various thinkers. Of those who belong to the more modern section, Mill was an agnostic rationalist, Lord Acton was a liberal-minded member of the Church of Rome, a very great historian and always under suspicion from the authorities of his Church, Pro-

fessor Tawney was a Christian Socialist whose *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* caused him to be much disliked by the more reactionary members of the Church of England. But there is one decided bond between them, an appeal to the scientific, empirical method of thinking which has marked English thought from the days of Locke and of Hume. Concern with freedom of thought and speech leads on to a concern with the functions and the limits of governments. The liberal becomes essentially humanistic in his generalised concern for man within the world. It is this approach to thought which has linked him so closely to utilitarian strivings after human happiness and to care for human progress and development. Whatever immediate relationships may have arisen for the individual in his particular environment, the liberals here quoted form a community representative of a whole area of thought that has done much to determine the democratic phases of Western civilisation.

The present selection of their writings is a highly important anthology serving as a guide to anybody who wishes to explore and to follow up the development of liberal thought over three centuries. A scholarly essay is contributed by Dr. Plamenatz. The closing paragraphs may quarrel with Mill upon certain details but they express a faith in man which is fully in accord with the tradition which he is setting forth in this anthology. Secularism, freethought, rationalism are the heirs to this tradition and represent it to the full. But it is essential that the present day exponent of the tradition should be fully aware of the attitudes and claims of his forebears. It is to be hoped that anybody who claims to stand within the liberal tradition of freedom should possess himself of this excellent work and should make himself a master of its contents. The book in itself is nothing less than a thorough education in the liberal spirit, an end which anybody claiming to be a thinker truly free should seek to possess.

CORRESPONDENCE

FROM ITALY

I am rather surprised that you never mentioned in THE FREETHINKER that the Italian President, Saragat, is a convinced Freethinker. This is not secret; everyone knows it. But it just goes to show that Italy is the land of freedom! You can think and almost do exactly what you like.

Only in the closed Roman Catholic circles is there lack of freedom, but it is voluntary, taken upon themselves by those who cling to the priests' skirts. The great mass of the Italian people is not at all interested in ecclesiastical and religious problems. The only thing that is important for them is the economical problem. This explains why the Vatican and higher Roman Catholic circles are so money-bent: they are Italians!

MARY BLAKE, (Padua)

THE WAY FORWARD

As a Humanist, World Federalist and Esperantist I applaud E. G. Macfarlane (THE FREETHINKER, 18/6/65) in wanting a democratic system of world organisation which "unlike communism and fascism, includes freedom of thought, speech and association as civic rights".

But I see no reason for thinking that to do that we must also fight nationalism and love of one's country. As a citizen here in North America I have two loyalties, I love my state and am proud to be called a loyal Badger (that is what we call citizens of Wisconsin) and I am also proud to be an American—a citizen of a great republic a federal union operated with a common language. And I hope some day to be able to say I am a citizen of the UN and loyal to all humanity. It seems to me it would be smart for all peoples including flag wavers of all nations, to join in working to substitute law for war.

When our federal union was formed in 1789 most all the states had state religions, while the federal union provided for separation of church and state. Now all states have come over to the federal position. Is it not reasonable to suppose that this would happen under world union? Our union of 50 states has had peace for 100 years, if for 50 states why not 150 states?

GLENN P. TURNER, (Middleton, Wisconsin).

ANSWERS TO A CLERICAL CRITIC

It is unusual but refreshing to find a glimmer of humour in THE FREETHINKER, which is why I enjoyed the Reverend Mr. Craddock's rambling letter in your July 16th issue. Is he a real person or is this a leg-pull?

Assuming the former, I am amused to learn, and from such a source, that the Bible is the Jews' effort "to explain the then known history of man" and is not therefore the inspired word of god. That the world is a "few million years" old, by which admission he has thrown over the creation. And that the ignorance of the Freethinkers leads to self-shame and chaos.

I, who lay no claim to ignorance, and am neither ashamed nor chaotic, have always maintained that intelligent people think themselves out of religion rather than into it. The Reverend gentleman's letter, although confused and muddled, makes one thing quite clear. He is in no danger of losing his faith.

COLIN FRANKLIN.

I feel that the Editor was being too polite to the Rev. Craddock. I would describe his comments as unscientific rubbish and extremely ignorant of what Freethinkers have done to make society more tolerable. I hope he did not apply the same lack of reasoning to his medical practice as he applies to his "scientific" interpretations as a clergyman.

I am very proud to put my name to this letter for if I make any scientific statement I make sure that I am thinking like a

scientist. In the Rev. Craddock's place I would have been ashamed to put the letters M.B.,Ch.B., after my name.

Unfortunately the medical profession is dogged by people who if they were ever taught any scientific thinking and method seem unable to retain it. After the religion ridden and completely unscientific report on venereal disease perpetrated by the British Medical Association I found it impossible, as a person who wishes to live up to the term "medical science", to remain a member of that organisation.

My knowledge of developmental and adult human psychology helps me to an understanding of how a person with reasonable intelligence can come to have a defect in his powers of reasoning such that he believes in a force that he cannot perceive with any of his senses, not even indirectly as one might detect a proton with a radiation counter, or infer a solar magnetic field by the splitting of a spectral line. But I find it much more difficult to understand an educated (and to a great extent scientifically educated) man writing what the Rev. Craddock has written.

Why must religious doctors trot out this nonsense about pain being ennobling or "... producing marvels of courage and even happy acceptance ..."? Perhaps in my experience of human suffering I was able to see my patients without the need to cash in, in a religious sense on their unhappiness.

I suppose I must in despair place the Rev. Craddock into the same category as a religious medical colleague who when she discovered that I was an Atheist could not understand how it was possible for me to be a doctor, but what astonished me more, enquired what it was that stopped me murdering her there and then! In the face of such mental blindness how can reason hope to prevail?

I am a "... member of a society whose greatest joy is in service to others especially the helpless ..." which is exactly why I joined the National Secular Society and support THE FREETHINKER to help a little to combat the sort of ignorance that the

Rev. Craddock propagates, ignorance which has impeded human progress for too long. As a doctor my job is to make people happy here and now and not waste time and effort cluttering people's short lives with nonsense about heaven and a heavenly father, in fact I have spent a lot of time undoing the damage done by the ghastly influence of religion on people's lives and thinking, and usually, of course, in the face of religious opposition.

Perhaps the Rev. Craddock would like to make another scientific effort at explaining where this place is that he is going to when his circulation fails and his brain cells die. Which galaxy is it in, or is it beyond the parts of the universe that recedes with the speed of light—a convenient suggestion Rev. Craddock? At least the chicken in the barn is not suffering from delusions and hallucinations, and practising deception on his fellows.

I should feel sorry for the Rev. Craddock, but I find it very difficult when I consider the damage his kind has done and continues to do to society.

KENNETH E. JONES, MB, CHB.

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TRADITION has fossilised a great many customs that were considered necessary by primitive man but have lost all meaning nowadays. Take for instance our greeting habits; they arose at the stage when every stranger was a suspect enemy. So if people approached each other in a peaceful spirit they had to show that they did not carry arms and trusted each other. They did this by putting down their helmets and thrusting a hand into the other's hand. The lifting of one's headgear, and the shaking of hands are our survivals in this respect; in the Far East the palms of both hands are put together and the Semites express the wish of "Peace".

Similarly, our traditional wedding customs arose in conditions when marriage had a quite different aspect. Without going into the intricacies of matrilineal or patrilineal society, exogamy or endogamy and totem magic with the restrictions of marriage groups, it can be broadly stated that primitive man and woman have different but complementary tasks. Apart from producing and rearing the offspring, the woman generally toils, the man has to be ready to protect and defend his kin. Labour is divided between groups—at one stage sex groups. Marriage is the safeguard for the smooth functioning of this division of labour.

The Economic Contract

It has become fashionable to deny that society is regulated by economic considerations, and marriage in particular is presented as a predominantly sexual union, with the transfer of bridewealth for the sole purpose of providing the necessary sanction to the offspring, i.e. making them legitimate and affiliated members of a certain clan. However, this is explaining primitive conditions in terms of modern society. So long as a man kept within the magic blood bonds he could have any amount of sex relations without recourse to marriage, and Malinowsky reported that the Trobrianders were unrestricted in their pre-nuptial intercourse until marriage, which was concluded by publicly sharing a meal. This clearly points to an economic contract.

The wife has to be purchased just because she represents labour that is to be transferred from her clan (or father) to that of the husband; if the groom is unable to pay her value in kind or cattle, he may do it in service, but as the main domestic or agricultural worker the woman is an asset which is frequently stolen or captured. The "Best Man" is in fact the groom's best friend who knows about his plans of rape and accompanies him; and the honeymoon journey is a survival of the elopement into hiding.

In many parts of the world the bride is hidden before the wedding day and there are mock fights between the parties, not seldom with a ceremonial abduction of the bride.¹

Fertility Rites

Nowadays when so much is talked of the birth control pill and family planning, it is slightly ridiculous that customs should still be strictly observed which originally were nothing less than fertility rites. In olden times when more

hands secured more wealth, a large family was what everybody wanted; to express this wish to the benevolent life spirits, flowers were carried or thrown at the bride—now symbolised by coloured paper shavings (sometimes called *confetti* or *coriandoli*, as sweetmeat and sugar-coated coriander seed were thrown). The children who now follow the couple into the church were formerly put in the bride's lap. And the "old boot" is not only a vagina symbol, it

represents Fortune's cornucopia, the horn of plenty. Prior to producing containers and vessels, primitive man used what nature provided: gourds or calabash, cranium and horn. Sexual lust being epitomised in the he-goat—hence purely procreative nature deities from

Pan to the devil were conceived in his image—his horn is connected with the idea of fertility. Its substitute is the boot (or shoe), successor of the ancient hose. That is why children—now the recipients, no longer the presents themselves—put out shoes or stockings to receive their Christmas presents.

In the wedding ritual, the boot or shoe is so to speak the visiting card for the defloration in the bridal night. The wedding cake is an ancient sacrifice, and the ceremonial cutting of the cake testifies to guests and ghosts (i.e. the spirits of the home) that the couple have started a common household.² Feasting together, the bride was introduced to the kinsmen; the wedding banquet today is a survival of this ceremony.

Superstitious people are always afraid that their happiness may arouse the envy and wrath of evil spirits, hence the necessity of appeasing sacrifices on the occasions of births, weddings, etc. All our greetings and wishing formulas are part of old magic. In Central Europe people would, however, be angry and inconsolable if you wished them luck instead of "Break your leg and legs" because wishing well would attract the spite of a host of evil spirits. The throwing away of money is an appeasing sacrifice of the bride.

The Rite on the Threshold

The fire of the hearth was the most sacred place in the home and the newly weds used to go round it so that the *genius loci* might get acquainted with the new mistress of the house and sanction her presence and right to cook. However, before you can reach this altar of the private homestead you have to pass through the entrance door and cross another seat of spirits: the threshold.

The Roman god Janus, being the main protector of gates and doors, carried the keys that open and lock everything; he survives in St. Peter, the celestial doorkeeper. Janus had many domestic helpers, among them the spirits of the threshold. The Bible deals with them frequently (cf. Ez. 9, 3; 10, 4-18; Zeph. 1/9; 1. Sam. 5, 4ff) and the capsule (called *mezuzah*) nailed to the doorpost in a way reminiscent of a penis in erection (cf. the Greek *Hermes* in front of doors believed to ward off the entrance of evil spirits) is an apotropaic charm (wrought by means of nakedness or noise).³ According to Exodus 28, 33ff,

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Wedding Customs and All That

By T. HILL

priests must have little bells on the hem of their robes in order to scare away the demons of the threshold, and the priests of Dagon at Asdod did not tread on the threshold of the temple (1. Sam. 5, 5).

The bride, arriving as a stranger, must therefore be borne over this magic seat of the domestic spirits.⁴

The dead hand of tradition—including religion—petrifies the dead shells of originally magic action, now devoid of all meaning in a modern world. In a society of slave owners it was easy for the masters to observe a full sabbatarian rest, i.e. to have just a bit more leisure than generally on other days, without any harm to the community, or to fuss about food taboos engendered from magical ideas: ritual slaughter for kosher food aimed at cleansing the meat as much as possible from the blood which was thought to house the "life spirits" of the victim, crying out for vengeance (Gen. 4, 10). Catholics eat fish on Friday i.e. the day of the goddess Freiya—one of the many personifications of Virgo, to whom the fish was for astrological reasons holy.

Marriage is foremost a union of persons, hence there are various symbolic features connected with it, such as joining of hands, binding together of garments in magic knots, exchange of rings and other symbolic shackles. Presents of jewellery and ornaments tend to secure the magic power of precious stones and metals; in particular, ornaments are amulets to guard the various orifices of the body against the entrance of evil spirits. Plant magic also serves for protection. Then we have rites in which bride and groom eat together or march round a fire and present themselves as joint masters of the house.⁵

The majority of the rites, however, are performed to promote the fertility of the union (e.g. pouring of rice, wheat, flowers, and in particular water on the head of the bride; the use of children in the ceremony, etc.). Since the low technical level of primitive labour required many

hands, there was never a danger in too many. If the community grew too quickly there was always room for the surplus to settle somewhere else, but shortage of labour meant extinction, and infant mortality among primitive people is very high. The magical rites closely connected with marriage and childbirth were the ideological expression of a stage in human development which we have long since left behind. Living in the machine age, we rather are afraid of overpopulation, but we still perform the primitive fertility rites.

1. Simulated rape of the bride or conflict for her possession are surviving features of marriage by capture or elopement. As soon as slaves (or other servile classes) did the actual work, the clan or family of the bride was no longer at the receiving end but had to pay a dowry for the maintenance of the girl.

2. At the *confarreatio*—the solemnised wedding in ancient Rome—a cake was offered to Iuppiter Farreus and sacramentally shared by bride and groom in the presence of the Pontifex Maximus, the flamen dialis and ten other witnesses.

3. On this doorpost symbol cf. also Dt. 6, 9; 11, 20. The practice of inscribing doorposts and lintels with holy signs, words or texts to guard the home against the entrance of evil spirits is attested in many lands.

4. On the bells on the skirt of the Jewish high priest's robe see also Ex. 39, 25. The bride still being a stranger must treat the spirit of the threshold with great reverence—she may step over it (never on it), provided she does it with the right foot foremost. The ancient Slavs called these spirits *domovoj* and propitiated them at certain periods by offerings. The threshold—associated with the hearth—was the first shrine where sometimes even the dead of the house were buried. Tradition has it that the Britons buried their god Belinus at the gates of the Thames (Billingsgate).

5. The Roman bride after having been taken with a ritual show of force from the arms of her mother, was led in procession to the house of her husband by three boys, sons of living parents, whilst nuts were thrown. At the gate, the young wife smeared the doorposts with oil and fat and then tied a thread of wool around them as sacrifice. She was then lifted over the threshold and "received into community of fire and water" (i.e. permitted to cook at the hearth). Then she shared out three coins (*asses*), one to her husband, one to the spirit of the hearth, and the third she threw at the nearest crossways.

From Believer to Disbeliever

By DORINE CLARK

I TOOK that giant step—from believer to disbeliever. Rather, it was a gradual walking away from the trodden path of cultist religion, starting with my abrupt affranchise from the Catholic faith and its precepts I was raised in.

I was born in Austria, where the Catholic faith was the main religion as I guess it still is. My father was what they called a "Taufbuch Christian", meaning one baptised in the faith, but not a regularly practising church member, while my mother was an ardent adherent of the faith, writing tracts and articles for countless Catholic magazines. At age nine, I, an only child of well-to-do parents, was placed as a boarder into the convent school of Sta. Christiana, in the vicinity of Vienna, where I remained in the care of nuns till age sixteen. No matter what may have been going on in other convent schools, I cannot say one word against the nuns, who were dedicated teachers. Nothing immoral or unethical took place within those convent walls while I was there.

Looking back, recalling the unsanitary, unhygienic conditions we had to contend with, the rigid discipline we underwent daily, hourly, I know any American child would have rebelled. I do not intend to dwell here on the sad fact that we were only permitted a full bath once a month—this, to be taken with our shift on, for decency's sake—the weekly foot baths, and changing your underwear, no matter how soiled, once a week. But it was the rigid spiritual routine that dented my mind, endowing me with

a deep-rooted guilt complex that made suffering an attractive necessity for redemption. I became a show-off, a saintly hypocrite, kneeling on the ice-cold dormitory floor, with the chaste curtain enshrouding my bed left open, eyes closed, blonde hair falling picturesquely, (so I hoped), down to my fat behind, my hands in the well-known "praying hands" position. I was partly praying, but the greater part of me wanted to be noticed and admired as a budding saint. I caught various colds, spending time kneeling on the cold floor, holding my private mass. Now fifty years later, I'm still trying to catch up on sleep I missed then, getting up at dawn to attend daily mass in the ice-cold chapel. At weekly confession, I invented interesting sins, that were forgiven in order for me to partake of the holy communion afterwards. Exposed to this mental assault for seven years, I became a fear-ridden girl, burning with a false humility, over-anxious to turn the other cheek—a glorified humility that made me unfit for the daily struggle of life and the competition going on outside convent walls.

Maybe this spirit of false, misplaced humility was the gravest wrong inflicted on me by my Catholic convent upbringing, endowing me with a lasting inferiority complex I was unable to shed for years. To me, a dreamy, anaemic child, endowed with a writer's luxuriant imagination, the sensuous imagery, the ornamental liturgic rites of the Catholic Church, held immense appeal. So much so,

(Continued on page 255)

The World is Too Much With Us

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

IN TACKLING the problem of "The Worldly Church", the second essay in *Objections to Roman Catholicism*, John M. Todd, of the religious publishing firm Darton, Longman and Todd, attempts to outline some answer to an objection—almost a series of objections—historically very much at the heart of English Protestantism. Those Anglican worshippers who have kept themselves aloof from neo-Catholic movements within the Established Church, find repose in the quiet and simple dignity of what has become a native tradition of worship, in the vernacular, with (by any standards) a fine musical heritage, a married and approachable clergy, and a hallowed insularity. Anathema and remote from the country parsonage, the yew-lined churchyard with its lynch-gate and the bells floating across the buttercup meadows of grazing cattle, is the pomp of prelate and pontiff of what Todd terms "the triumphal tradition". This, to the Anglican, is of the quintessence of the "Scarlet Woman", repudiated at the Reformation. To the Catholic mentality, reared in the feudal love of symbolism it is, rather, the "visible and outward sign" (to employ the phrase always used of the sacraments) of a divine authority, the power of the Keys. Probably the average lay Catholic rather likes it; the Protestant mistrusts it utterly.

Hitherto, the Catholic apologist, attempting to "explain" this paradoxical contradiction between the men who rule in the Vatican, as in some spiritual—and perhaps not so spiritual—Kremlin or Pentagon, and their profession to follow an Exemplar who is "meek and humble of heart", have pointed to a basic paradox at the very heart of the Christian position. The Church is "in the world and not of it". It addresses to salvation all kinds and conditions of men. For this, it has been pleaded, a rigid, uniform and authoritarian organisation has necessarily been evolved. Yet the organisation exists solely to bid men put their whole trust and whole purpose in another, an unseen, world, to the deprivation of comfort, and the loss of life itself, should need demand. Itself an *imperium*, it demands that its members sacrifice themselves in any clash with the "worldly", the kings, the powers. The most earthly system the world has seen, exists only for the sake of the most other-worldly philosophy the world has ever heard. But though the spirit giveth life, the letter killeth. The problem of the Church is seen in little in the problem of the mendicant orders. An ethereal St. Francis of Assisi inspires; Elias of Cortina carries on in the second generation! Supranationalism becomes merely internationalism, uniformity become rigidity, orthodoxy becomes convention; in a word "the objection we are concerned with is that the Catholic Church, in accepting . . . involvement with the world has institutionalised" itself.

Todd gives a long and important quotation from Père Congar's *Problem of Authority*, (London, 1962), a work which traces the rise of "legalism" to the medieval period, to the effect that from the 11th century the authority of the Church borrowed from the "vocabulary, insignia, style and ideology of the imperial court", things themselves often traceable to pre-Christian times. From these, even more objectionable effects derived—more especially the Church's adoption of the secular penology for ideological offences. Todd admits that a Christian cannot honestly accept these things as the inevitable results of economic and political forces, because "it is precisely part of the Christian case that man can control his destiny on

earth to some degree, that this world is not purely the result of material factors outside his control".

The villain of this undesirable position is the Curia, described as the "Church's Civil Service", both Home Office and Foreign, with every decision underlined by God Himself! Todd turns again to Père Congar and his views on the results of "this combination of centralisation and infallibility" in the period following the Council of Trent. Père Congar is alive to the peril of the Church's dilemma. "At a time when the modern world is attempting to build its life on the principle of the individual personality . . . the Catholic Church since the sixteenth century has put into practice a genuine 'mystique' of authority . . . which . . . may be characterised as the notion of complete identification of God's will with the institutional form of authority".

It might be argued nowadays that the *aggiornamento* is in full pelt from all this. Todd is prepared to concede that the Church is still committed to these bad traditions, and that "the objector can say that the *aggiornamento* has in any case not yet had the seal of success put upon it".

Todd has now put the case as harshly, as bluntly, and as seriously as he can. No doubt his intention is not least to make his reply the more convincing. While we are stating the case for the prosecution he seems to say, let us paint it severely; this gives us more scope to clear up more misconceptions when we advance to the defence. A reply and a defence he does possess. If these objections were, to him, unanswerable, he would not, he says, and he says it truly, have any right to remain in the Roman Catholic Church, and moreover, "a sincere and committed member of it".

Let us not forget this when we examine that answer. There can, he avers, be only one answer to the particular objection he has examined. It is that "the Church is a sacrament of the divine assistance, that the balance of charity, of goodness, of holiness, and . . . of achievement . . . outweighs the bad". Even at the height of the era when the legalistic tradition was growing, that Church could produce St. Francis, whose life was "a living contradiction of legalism" and who was yet "totally loyal to the Roman See". Todd quotes again from Père Congar, that one protest made against the Church's authoritarianism was never taken seriously enough, that of the

anti-ecclesiastical spiritual movements so frequent in the twelfth century and which continued in the Franciscan spiritual movement down to the fourteenth century when it was succeeded by Lollardism and subsequently by the Hussite movement.

Moreover:

. . . theology preserved many elements of the ancient ecclesiology, in a balanced view which lasted until the death of the two greatest thirteenth century doctors, Thomas and Bonaventure . . . We should be guilty of a serious omission if we failed to mention what we might call the right of conscience.

And finally from Père Congar:—

. . . the exercise of authority in the Church today is marked by a predominance of pastoral care over prelacy, of tasks and responsibilities over the claiming of privileges.

Todd finds other grounds of reconciliation for his conscience; that the Church is still changing and adapting itself; if her face retains some medieval features, she is fast assuming more modern ones. In short, this apologist finds his personal comfort in the doctrine of a *changing*

(Concluded on page 252)

This Believing World

ONE claim Spiritualists often make is that they have on many occasions solved murder crimes by furnishing the police with all the necessary explanatory details. Unfortunately, these claims are often thirty or forty years old, and more often than not, concern crimes which took place in Iceland or the Fiji Islands, or some such place—rarely if ever in Britain. So one way or another they can never be checked. A delightful example of the kind of thing we get here is the lurid case of "Jack the Ripper", the murderer who was never caught, and whose name, as far as the police records are publicly known, has never been revealed.

★

A BIOGRAPHY of the Ripper has just been published, and *Psychic News* immediately came forward to tell us the glad tidings that "Spiritualists, of course, have long been aware of the sadistic murderer's true identity", a statement which is really funny. It appears that a Spiritualist, R. J. Lees, left a "secret" document relating how he went to the police about a murder, but was treated as a crank, and no notice taken of him. The point is that the only person who says he saw the murderer is Lees himself, and the only account of this is "secret". Obviously, the police estimate of Lees was correct, for Lees's solution has long been known as a mere supposition.

★

THE London *Evening News's* pet theologian holds forth every Saturday, and in the July 10th number, we are told that the Sermon on the Mount "represents the peak of ethical doctrine". Like so many literary discourses, we have an idea that it is much more talked about than read. So here are a few of its "peaks"—"Blessed are the poor in spirit", "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth", "Take therefore no thought for the morrow", "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth". And so we could go on. Much of the Sermon has long been discarded as useless by Christians themselves.

★

IN FACT, one of them, the late Dr. Magee, Bishop of Peterborough, insisted that "a Christian state carrying out in all its relations the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount could not exist for a week". And more recently, the Bishop of Ripon said, "Any man who lived strictly by the Sermon on the Mount would find himself in the workhouse". But then, who reads it these days?

★

HERE is a vicar who thinks that "blue jokes" are better than a "blue pencil"—a point of view not at all common in Christianity. He is the Rev. G. Austin of Eaton Bray, near Luton, who in his parish magazine attacks censorship, which he considers at best "comical", and at worst, totally "abhorrent". Mr. Austin however appears to know very little of the history of sex under Christian rule. He says that connecting it with "obscenity and pornography" is a

"totally unchristian idea". One can point out to him that the idea of "equating obscenity and pornography" with sex was almost the full burden of Christian fulminations during its long history. Has he ever read the Church Fathers?

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

(Concluded from page 251)

Church. "When we look at this . . . the objections begin to look much less cogent".

Catholicism is sure, he reminds us, that Jesus did not intend a purely "charismatic" association of followers. Institutionalism is objectionable, but institutions are not.

This is a closely argued, deeply felt, essay; it is sincere, perhaps more so than others in the book. Yet having said that, we have perhaps said the best that can be said. An attempt to state the difficulties, in terms which accord with the tone of modern controversy, is not enough. When all is done, the only answer he can fall back on, is the changing nature of the Church. Does this not beg the question? What extraneous forces are making it change, has it really repented of its medieval authoritarianism? The truth is, of course, that this world is here, but the existence of another yet remains to be proved. It is all very well for the Church to become shamefaced about its pomp after two thousand years. This put it in power, this keeps it in power, camouflage it as you will. Now the Church has the weight of inertia behind it, it may better be able to afford this self-criticism. Abstract concessions to rights of conscience are far from being concrete respect accorded to those rights. We may be forgiven if we more than suspect recent changes, and more especially those, quoted by Todd, which emanated from Pius XII, that they are an attempt not to be left behind rather than a bid for enlightened leadership. Too truly, whatever the theory, the Church neither has been, nor is "charismatic". For most of us, the institution remains the supreme example of institutionalism.

To quote St. Francis is dangerous. Even apart from the question as to whether this poet can have understood the complexities of curial politics (surely relevant to his too oft-quoted unquestioning obedience to the See of Peter), his life above all reproduces in exactly parallel form the criticism levelled against the Church. The Franciscan movement is notorious for its splinters and its branches, which still persist. That they *survive* is due to a common allegiance to the central government of the Church.

To quote the Lollards and Hussites is disastrous, whether it is to be understood that earlier protests ended logically thus, or whether it is to be understood that somehow they have now been absorbed into the Catholic tradition! Fewer heretics can have been more savagely suppressed by the "worldly Church". And so much goes by default; there is not, for example, a single reference to Boniface VIII, to the Borgias, or to the Conciliar movement. Would, too, the world today, stand for anything else than responsible pastoral care? The churchmen who became arrogant in their heyday have been forced to take leaves out of the secular reformers' notebooks.

There remains so much that I would like to say about Mr. Todd's contribution to this volume but space forbids. I content myself with concluding that the attempt is unlikely to convince Freethinkers, and Catholics themselves must be disappointed that he leaves far better arguments in the traditional armoury of Catholic apologists to rust unused.

[Objections to Roman Catholicism is published by Constable at 18s.]

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Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, August 8th, 6.45 p.m.: A Meeting.

Notes and News

THIS week we print three articles by women Freethinkers who were formerly Roman Catholics. Our popular contributor Gillian Hawtin, for some time a teacher in a Catholic school, continues her criticism of the various essays in *Objections to Roman Catholicism*. Phyllis K. Graham, already known to readers as the author of "How I Became a Humanist" (which appeared in our May 21st and 28th issues, and is soon to be issued as a pamphlet by the Pioneer Press) is particularly qualified to write on the effects of "A Meditation on the Crucifix", after her experiences as a Carmelite nun. And Dorine Clark—whose article, "From Believer to Disbeliever" is reprinted from the American *Age of Reason* magazine—was educated in a convent and "almost decided to become a nun". Luckily, as Mrs. Clark told the Editor of the *Age of Reason*, "the boys changed that". But, she added, "those convent teachings have left their indelible mark on me. I have carried a guilt complex with me all these days".

THE June-July issue of *Portuguese and Colonial Bulletin* reported "another great victory", the freeing of Manuel Guedes after 18 years' imprisonment. PIDE asked for a further extension of the "security measures" for Guedes—whose sentence ended in 1956—and the Plenary Court agreed to this demand, prolonging the "measures" for another three years. However, an appeal to the Supreme Court, based on irregularities of procedure, was upheld, and the prisoner was released in April. There was no doubt, the *Bulletin* said, "that the determining factor in this great victory was again the weight of international public opinion plus the feeling of the Portuguese people. Once more a political prisoner who was at the centre of our campaign has been freed". But the *Bulletin* reminded us that there were still many more political prisoners in Salazar's jails. The successes should encourage us to increase our efforts on behalf of men like Jose Vitoriano, the trade unionist who has spent more than 14 years in

jail, Antonio Dias Lourenco, Carlos Costa, Pires Jorge, Blanqui Teixeira and Octavio Pato; and women like Maria Alda Nogueira, Fernanda Paiva Tomaz, Sofia Ferreira, Dr. Julieta Gandra, Albina Fernandes and Natalia David.

"AM I a Jew?" asked Bernard Levin, in a perceptive article in the *New Statesman* (23/7/65). He had, he said a Jewish name and a Jewish nose—though there was no such thing. But Mr. Levin soon admitted that he was begging the question. He knew perfectly well that he was a Jew; what he was really inquiring was, what this meant to him. He rejected Judaism "more or less as soon as I was old enough to have any understanding of what religion was about"; and didn't know whether he felt further from it than from most religions because of its silly dietary laws or "the savage monotheism of Jehovah". Such "objective religious sympathies as I have" were, Mr. Levin said, with "the quietist faiths, like Buddhism" or with "a straightforward message of salvation like Christianity". But he was "unable in fact to accept any of them".

MR. LEVIN then turned to other aspects of Jewishness. "Has an idea so old and tenacious, so provocative of generosity and malice, good and evil, responsible for such prodigious outpourings of words and deeds ceased to have any meaning at all?" For Mr. Levin, it had. If, he asked, "you do not consider yourself Jewish enough to go to Israel, and not Judaistic enough to go to the synagogue, what is left but a vague necessity to belong?" And this, he added, "will disappear, or at any rate be dispersed, with further intermarriage and assimilation" as will "the superficialities attributable to upbringing and environment".

SWEDISH Radio (SR) has, we learn from a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* (23/7/65), "been severely criticised recently for some of its programmes" which the writer, the Rev. Richard Cedergren, described as "indecent and in bad taste". Complaints from listeners over a programme "blaspheming the Holy Communion" forced SR to broadcast a public apology; "and the police followed up by having four of the producers summoned before the Stockholm magistrates' court, where they were convicted and fined as blasphemers". It seems that SR also ridiculed "the request to the Government by more than two million citizens that religious instruction be continued in the schools". However, as Mr. Cedergren reported with relief, the Swedish Government has decided to continue its RI.

DURING the second world war, young Swedes like Mr. Cedergren looked up to our own BBC as "the voice of freedom, dignity and democracy". Today, he believed, the responsibility of the BBC was even greater when "the emerging nations" still looked to Britain for a lead. And he would regard it as a tragedy if there should be any departure from the original concept of the Corporation as a "temple of the Arts and Muses dedicated to Almighty God", where "the people, inclining their ear to whatsoever things are beautiful and honest and of good report, may tread the path of wisdom and righteousness".

"IN HIS capacity as Congregationalist or as Chief Minister in a secular Government, Mr. Wilson couldn't care less about the appointment of Anglican bishops". That is the view of the Rev. Christopher Wansey, proctor for the diocese of Chelmsford, who accordingly asked the Prime Minister not to nominate a new Bishop of Liverpool, Dr. C. A. Martin, who is retiring. Mr. Wansey suggested that Mr. Wilson should instead pass to the Crown, recommendations from Church authorities.

A Meditation on the Crucifix

By PHYLLIS GRAHAM

THE prioress moved with measured pace down the long cloister, accompanied by the sub-prioress at a respectful half-step behind. A shadow over against one of the low arched windows caught the ever-watchful eye of the prioress, who paused for a moment to investigate. Her second-in-command drew up automatically, waiting like a faithful hound in the rear. The pause expanded into a full minute, but not by so much as a shuffle was the cloistral silence desecrated.

The prioress turned at last and looked at the other, a strange look that said many things and left more unspoken. The regal, rather hard-bitten face had softened; a half-smile lit it from some unfamiliar hearthfire within. "Look", she said, and stood aside graciously from the window.

What they saw was a young novice sitting on a tree-stump in the courtyard beyond the window. Nothing unusual in that, for along the length of the cloister ran a whole series of such tiny walled patios, where sisters could enjoy the triple benefit of prayer, solitude and good fresh air. What had caught the attention of the prioress had perhaps appealed to some long-sacrificed aesthetic sense—for at heart she remained the artist her vows had renounced for ever. The white-veiled novice in her fresh young beauty certainly made a picture, all the more moving for its total unselfconsciousness. Her crucifix, supported on her slender hands, lay in her lap like a child. Her eyes were fixed on the dying face of the Crucified, her whole being concentrated in a passionate yet serene absorption.

"Now that", murmured the prioress, so softly that the silence was scarcely broken, "is a very beautiful sight".

And the sub-prioress, no artist but a good artisan among the labourers of the vineyard, loyally concurred.

This little vignette from the pages of memory was the starting-point of my Meditation. I, too, once as ingenuous—if not as beautiful—as that fellow-novice (whom I remember with sisterly affection), could gaze upon the symbol of redemption with appropriately pious feelings, and never a qualm of the nausea it inspires in me today. But love can turn to loathing, and the banquet of the soul goes sour. No tender sentiment is left in me today to veil the harsh outlines of what I now think of as the Christian swastika.

For I can no longer regard it as an object of contemplation on its own; I see it chiefly as a tool or a weapon in the hands of power. I cannot say, "This is a record of historical reality", because there is no proof that it is anything of the sort. I cannot tell myself, "This is the image of your dying God", because my sanity rejects the notion of a gibbeted god and the whole sordid transaction of "divine appeasement" behind the obscene spectacle. I cannot see the crucifix except in the context of what humanity has done with it. And that, on the whole, is a sorer subject for meditation than the grisly image itself, for it leads to an appalled understanding of what the crucifix has done to humanity.

To pass through the innocent gateway of that nun's devotion into the secrets of her heart might help us on the first step towards understanding. She has, after all, given her life to the crucifix; she glories in her status of "Bride of the Crucified"; a study of her mental attitudes should reveal something of the power of the crucifix in action. What lies behind the rapt absorption, the personal surrender, the mask of serenity?

A state of mind cast in the same mould as the millions

of believers; only, shall we say, more firmly, irrevocably set, by the inclinations of her temperament and the rigidity of her way of life. A review of her interior, therefore, will provide a facsimile of the "crucifix-mentality" stamped on the mind of Christendom through the centuries, clearer in outline, no doubt, than its imprint on the muddled masses, and so more ruthless, more absolute—but not more indelible. For the fatal seal has pressed itself deep into the collective unconscious of the white races; the West, and the progeny of the West, carry it in the hidden life-cells like a cancer. The pincers of this sinister crab induce the multiple pains of our civilisation, from malaise to anguish.

To borrow the words of John the Evangelist (though I speak not of Jesus and what he did, but concerning the idol we made of him and what our idolatry has done for us) "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" on this awesome subject. In an effort to comprehend *in parvo* the magnitude of its significance, I shall try to contemplate it under four simple headings, namely, Guilt, Fear, Gloom and Blood. For these seem to me the four great fruits of this Tree of Death, and the logical reward of an era of Meditation on the Crucifix.

Our little nun murmurs words of love to the figure on the cross: she has these moments of tender, exalted emotion, ripples of light across the dark deep waters of the night of faith. While they last they seem to her the touch of ultimate truth; they leave a faint glow when they are gone, a memory that may have to sustain her through long-lasting "nights of the spirit". This is the gentler, poetic side of the commerce between "God" and "his creature". The harsher aspect is as crude and immoral as the baser kinds of human transaction. Or rather, infinitely more so, since they at least have the excuse of human limitation, while here we are doing business with "the infinite".

For the "Divine Lover" of mankind has plastered his beloved with guilt, and cashed in on it with a scheme of blackmail inconceivable by the genius of mere human crime. Our little nun, innocent and loving, knows that she was born in sin, tainted with the inescapable shame of "our first parents' disobedience". I am aware that we are in the second half of the twentieth century, but what I have just said, incredible as it may seem, is as firmly fixated in her mind as if she were living in the Dark Ages. She may, or may not, have heard rumours that these revered but reprehensible progenitors of ours were probably semi-apes who had never heard of Jehovah or any other brand of deity, and whose sole concern was to keep alive in a hostile and predatory world: which, all honour to them and the race they parented, they contrived to do without benefit of clergy or assistance from divine grace. But to her indoctrinated mind evolution is a ghost word, meaningless—apart from its aura of danger—beside the august reality of "Original Sin". She knows that man is a "fallen creature", and never can unknow it, for the whole structure of her faith is raised on this foundation; though there is no evidence anywhere in the story of mankind that man-of-ape fell from anything more lofty than the trees he once swung in!

As surely as a bastard she is, therefore, "outside the inheritance" and "debarred from the society of the blessed". This unfortunate fact endows her, naturally,

with every undesirable quality associated with birth on the wrong side of the blanket. Against these dreadful propensities in herself she must struggle unremittingly all the days (and nights) of her life. She knows all this very intimately, not merely from having had it dinned into her from the cradle, but because she is only too aware of the ceaseless call of nature in many guises. (She lumps them all, alluring or otherwise, under the generic term "Sin").

But she knows, also, that she has been redeemed. Some colossal heavenly machinery has been set in motion: the heart of an aggrieved Father has been tapped for mercy by a devoted Son. Result: her bastardy is officially wiped out by baptismal waters, though these are powerless to remove the said propensities to wickedness, against which she must continue to struggle to the death. Provided she observes this, and other conditions laid down by Holy Mother Church, her "inheritance" will be restored to her and the Blessed will no longer look down their noses at her base estate.

And this is where the crucifix comes in: the Super-slackmail. For she cannot contemplate her "Spouse of Blood" (to quote another fervent gazer on the Crucified) without a deeper and more personally painful involvement in the mire of Guilt. Her unconscious participation in the

universal Orgy of Original Sin, her unavoidable bastardy, was not the only hammer that drove those cruel nails into sacred flesh. Her own wicked thoughts, words and deeds crucify her Lord anew, thus implicating her in a veritable anguish of guilt, which cannot be assuaged even by perpetual self-probing, frequent confession and the most rigorous mortification and penance. The very form of the crucifix—the image of a criminal paying for his crimes on a gibbet—ensures and drives home this induced guilt-fixation to the last turn of the screw. The more she gushes love and pity and sorrow for the Crucified, the more convinced she becomes that she is personally guilty of his sufferings and death. Her ever-mounting frenzy of remorse develops an obsession to expiate her imagined deicide by the holocaust of a life consumed in acts of reparation and sacrifice.

One cannot imagine any human situation, even among the most savage and primitive mentalities, more completely dominated by psychopathic superstition; or, outside the sphere of actual insanity, a more insidious and total degradation of the dignity of human nature. Those nailed and helpless fingers of the Crucified have, it seems horribly apparent, their nightmare doubles in the pincers of the crab.

(To be Continued)

The Pope's Daughter

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

"CESARE, this is poison just as mother used to make it".

"Lucrezia, you're a wonder".

"I'm a poisoner".

"That's it darling and you deserve all the money bags you're going to get when your Alfonso has tasted your home brew".

"Cesare, it's a work of art, not a home-brew. For weeks I've been in the mud searching for the damned flowers which look as if they grew just to be given enemies. Christ! the suck of that mud. It's taken me right down to the navel".

"Dear one, you dramatise. Lots of ladies take mud-baths as beauty treatment".

"You could be more generous, lover-brother. Night after night I've sat up distilling the flowers, making their life turn into one life. I've almost been asphyxiated by my own breath".

"You're a miracle, Lucrezia".

"You may not know it, brother, but you've just made one of the seven best poisoning remarks of the season. Another fortnight and my chalice of death will be no more than a phial of essence, all ready and eager. Exit Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara, my third husband, my bore".

"A funny taste in the wine, Cesare? Of course there was. Don't you see there simply had to be? You can't come and tell me calmly that you've stabbed Alfonso in a temper. Cesare, no. It was dreadful to hear you say that. At once I bled for you, I wept inside myself, I screamed. It was too terrible for . . . the poison was ready as I promised. When it's ready, it has a life of its own. I told you. Can't you comprehend that an essence with the power of death must have a will? For weeks and weeks I've been giving it this will, by bringing it to the peak of its perfection. Oh brother, darling brother, I had to give it to you when you said Alfonso was dead, for the poison was hungry. I had to put it in your wine. Oh Cesare, my heart is broken. For me the whole afternoon is poisoned . . .".

FROM BELIEVER TO DISBELIEVER

(Continued from page 250)

that at the age of sixteen, I contemplated seriously becoming a nun. World-removed contemplation appealed to my lazy nature; it would eliminate daily struggle for existence and competition, for which I thought myself unfit, aware, all too aware, of my many shortcomings. Serving God would still permit me to indulge in dreamy visions and, although giving me no status as a world citizen, would make me eligible to partake of Heavenly Glory and certain redemption of all my sins—real and imaginary ones.

Even though I escaped convent life at age sixteen, I still remained a visionary captive of the Catholic dogma. It warped my entire outlook on life, made my every act and decision dependent on whether a strict Catholic god would sanction or disapprove—disapproval meaning eternal hell-fire and damnation.

But perhaps the most eroding, corroding, damage to my psyche was the delicate delight in suffering, making it an ennobling state, a virtue, something that would bring me nearer to the Crucified One. Not content with ordinary suffering daily living may hold, I sought out martyrdom in untold ways only a visionary imagination can dream up. Thus I became an almost dedicated and willing loser in any healthy debate or struggle, surrendering without really trying to stand up to obstacles or people, with inner readiness and glee. This degrading mental attitude I maintained even years after staying away from Sunday church services.

Slowly, timorously, I began to look for some other spiritual anchorage, studying other religions, finding in each one something my probing mind could not fully accept.

Spending three years in Italy, studying art and sculpture, almost brought me back into the Catholic fold. Gazing enraptured at Fra Angelico's blue and golden angel paintings, at the huge canvasses of saints and Madonnas with or without Child, I had to admit those works of art had been inspired by deep religious faith. Later, years later, I could see how the Church hierarchy had been able to support great artists like Michelangelo and Leonardo Da

Vinci, keeping them from starving, allowing them to paint panels and church murals and sublimely lovely statues of saints and martyrs, with money those holy monarchs had gathered in pennies and dimes from the poor they kept in spiritual submission, fanning their fear with the threat of eternal hell-fire and damnation.

Although I kept on searching for some credo to adopt, something to believe in, something to live and die by and for, in moments of crisis, of imminent catastrophe, I still crept to the God of my childhood, asking Him to spare me His wrath, humbly acknowledging my many sins. Here and there, and in various places, I would sit in some cathedral while no service was going on, eyes closed, heart and mind open, waiting, hoping to be imbued with some feeling of faith. But, I felt nothing.

Then, in San Francisco, I started studying some Rosicrucian pamphlets and became convinced this was for me. It appeared more of a spiritual science, a cult for the thoughtful, without pomp and rite to impress the gullible. Thus, I travelled to Santa Cruz to visit their headquarters and was duly impressed with their world-wide correspondence branch. They claim to belong to the Essene Brotherhood—a brotherhood Christ was supposed to be part of—and a brother, garbed in chaste white, took me on a conducted tour. So far, so good. Here, finally, was an organisation based strictly on spiritual concentration and betterment—nothing much on the outside, all directed towards your inner man.

The white-robed Brother halted in a huge dark room, apparently a lecture hall. He walked to the wall and pressed a button, projecting a niche and bathing some figure there in a ghostly green light. I stopped in my tracks, waiting, as by pressing another button, he changed the light to blood-red.

"What's the gadget for?" I inquired disrespectfully.

"It's to heighten a member's concentration when meetings are held here," he stated.

That ended my interest in the Rosicrucians. They too, like all other cults I had come to know, resorted to some device to catch the impressionable, the gullible ones.

All through the years, studying up on Buddhism, Zen, Unitarianism, et al., I was invited by well-meaning friends worrying about my morale, to attend various religious services. Why not? I went to temple, to prayer meetings in tents, lectures by priests, doctors, converted movie stars, mental healers. Result, nil.

I finally came to the conclusion that a man could be decent, believe in moral values, be of service to others, without the degrading fear of hell-fire and damnation. That every human being has a moral indicator, a built-in device nature provided him with, telling him clearly what is right or wrong. Namely, his conscience. No conscience does *not* make cowards of us all; sorry Mr. Shakespeare, it endows a man with the necessary courage to be fully responsible for his actions. This eliminates a wrathful, vengeful God who holds men in abject terror. Such a belief can make man free in the finest, most noble sense of the word.

Yes, it takes either strength of mind or goodness of heart, to be such a man—an Atheist, as Samuel Taylor Coleridge so wisely stated.

HIS HOLINESS HAILS HIS SON!

The
ruins
are
inhabited

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

CORRESPONDENCE

POINTLESS

If the Rev. C. Strother already knows my points in advance, I see no sense in preparing a reply.

GEORGE R. GOODMAN.

NEW MORALITY OR NONE AT ALL?

A controversy between Gillian Hawtin and myself, on the nature of Christian morals is unlikely to affect the illegitimacy statistics of Oxford University, so let us fearlessly and calmly continue the argument.

Christian morality is not common sense. It is based on belief alone as the road to salvation, and the acceptance of suffering here for a reward hereafter. I quote from a tract recently put into my hand, "How many are trusting to their own righteousness and good works to take them, or help them into heaven, whereas God declares that the precious blood of Christ, trusted in by the sinner, is his only shelter from the coming wrath". I contend that, far from rejection of Christian morality because of the rejection of supernaturalism, the young question the god idea because of the immorality advocated and inherent in the Bible and the Christian scheme of atonement.

Christian ethics do not equate with common sense, they are the ravings of a nature-hating fanatic: hate your parents, desert wife and child, revel in persecution and poverty, love your enemies, endure suffering thankfully, abase yourself before tyranny. It is a Christian "sin" to look with lust at a woman, punishable with damnation, it is commendable to castrate oneself for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, hardly conformable with a rational advocacy of birth-control in a university. Common sense! Rather uncommon nonsense! In short, Christianity is a degrading Oriental superstition, entirely responsible for the evils in sex matters of which Gillian Hawtin complains. My objection to "reverent Humanists" is that, by giving lip service to Christian "morality", they do a disservice to both truth and morality.

EVA EBBURY.

HUMANIST TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

You and your readers may be interested to know of the formation of a Humanist Teachers' Association. This was begun as an independent organisation by members of the British Humanist Association and aims to give mutual support and confidence by discussion of, and help with, the problems of Humanist teachers; to secure revision of the Education Act with regard to the teaching of RE in schools; to consider ways of replacing RE by a reasoned approach to the moral problems young people must face; to advise the BHA on educational matters and to gain support from teacher members for BHA policies in this field.

I should be glad to hear from any interested teachers.

DOROTHY ROBERTS.

213 Pennymead, Harlow, Essex.

THE JACOBITE MOVEMENT

I should like to know what F. A. Ridley is trying to prove by writing an article on "The Jacobite Movement".

He seems to think that France aided Prince Charlie a great deal in the rising, whereas in truth France gave him very little aid. He landed in the north of Scotland without even an expeditionary force, and the clan chiefs of the Highlands tried in vain to dissuade him from what they thought a hopeless enterprise. Among all the world's heroes, as Frederick the Great told him, he was the only one who had made the attempt to conquer a kingdom without an army behind him. And, of course, he nearly did. The English regular soldiers were no match for the Highlanders man for man, and the defeat at Culloden was due to the vast superiority in numbers of Cumberland's army.

Cumberland had 9,000 trained men in excellent condition; Prince Charlie had but 5,000, and these exposed, and robbed of their night's sleep.

The butchery that took place after the battle against the wounded and dying Highlanders is best forgotten. Byron mourned the fall of the Highlanders in his "Lachin y Gair":

Ah! were you destined to die at Culloden!
Victory crown'd not your fall with applause:
Still were you happy in death's earthly slumber,
You rest with your clan in the caves of Braemar:
The pibroch resounds, to the piper's loud number,
Your deeds on the echoes of dark Loch na Garr.

R. SMITH

Details of membership of the National Secular Society and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Telephone: HOP 2717.

The Freethinker

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OF MICHIGAN

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THE Roman Catholic Church is not "pure spirit" freed from all earthly events. If the Church is a divine institution it has its roots firmly attached to time and space. It breathes the air of its own time. For in order to enjoy a spiritual or mystical experience, one first has to be sustained by material food. This applies even to the Church of Christ. For we know how much it costs to train and to support a missionary, however simply he may live. The 500 or 600 millions of Catholics [a much exaggerated numerical estimate F.A.R.] scattered all over the world, could not remain united without a centralised administration. This central administration is the Roman Curia, which usually seeks to build up reserves for the purpose of satisfying the current needs of Christianity. What are these reserves and how much do they amount to in all?

Delicate Negotiations

At present a conflict in which the Vatican and the Italian Government are the opposing parties has raised the question of the exact value of the current investments of the Vatican.

The Lateran Treaty signed on February 11th 1929, between the Italian state represented by Mussolini and the papacy represented by Pius XI exempted some of the Vatican's Italian investments from taxation. However, at the end of 1962, the Italian Government of the Left-Centre imposed the notorious *Cedolare*, a tax upon dividends of a kind similar to that already levied in several other countries, and payable by all Italians as well as by foreigners with investments in Italian concerns. However, exceptions were made in the case of the subjects of a number of states with whom reciprocal bilateral arrangements had already been concluded. The Holy See claimed exemption under this clause, under the 1929 Treaty and, in particular, on account of the special status accorded to the Vatican City, as also because the Vatican during this period was the only institution that provided free assistance to the poor.

After a good deal of procrastination, the Italian Government addressed a confidential circular to the various Italian companies in which the Vatican owned shares, authorising them to pay dividends to the Holy See without previously deducting tax. But the appointment of a Socialist as Minister of Finance, re-opened the issue, for the Minister demanded that the whole question of the Vatican's exemption from taxation should be referred for ultimate sanction to Parliament where the whole matter could be debated.

The present Italian Government of Signor Moro regards the Vatican as having moral and historical justification for its claim. But the left wing suspects that this special exemption may allow numerous Italian capitalists to evade their fiscal obligations in various ways. The Government must also take into account the contingency that, if the Holy See were to decide suddenly to get rid of its Italian investments and were to dump them simultaneously upon

the open market, it might have undesirable repercussions upon the country's economy.

It is estimated that the Holy See at present owns about 10 per cent of the entire number of shares registered on Italian Stock Exchanges. Enormous values are evidently involved since, at the end of December 1964, total Italian investments were valued at 5,500 milliards (thousands of millions) of lire, there being about 1,700 lire to the £1.

This would make the total capital invested by the Vatican in Italian securities at 550 milliards of lira—£323½m.

However, if we are to believe the English *Economist*, even this staggering sum falls short of the truth.

This is without pausing to

consider the absurdly exaggerated figures quoted by the anti-clerical press—not 10 per cent but three-quarters of the total Italian capital.

Stupendous Investments

What is certainly true, is that the specifically Italian investments of the Holy See represent only a tiny part of its world investments. Precisely what proportion, was, the *Economist* admitted, difficult to say. Probably a tenth or perhaps a twelfth, which would swell the Vatican investments to at least five thousand, six hundred millions of dollars. This estimate, let it be clear, covers only the holdings on Stock Exchanges and in other negotiable values; in a sentence, in liquid capital reserves. It entirely excludes its properties, domestic possessions, works of art, etc. We know, of course, that the Vatican collections of works of art and the like, are the richest in the world, quite incalculable in monetary terms. Nor do we include either the property owned by the Catholic Church in Europe, nor the Americas: properties that it is difficult to distinguish from the goods of dioceses, convents, colleges, etc., altogether independent of the Holy See itself.

This survey, then, is solely concerned in calculating the liquid reserves at the disposal of the Holy See. In order to give an idea of the figures cited above, it can be said that the Vatican's reserves equal the official holdings of France both in gold and foreign securities and not only in dollars. We may add in this connection, that the holdings of the Church of England amount only to £243 millions and, further, that the dollar reserves of the United Kingdom, are estimated at a thousand million (one milliard), or only a fifth of that of the Vatican, which is only surpassed by the collective totality of all the American life insurance companies. Accordingly, we must agree with the *Economist*, that the Vatican is one of the most powerful monopolies in the contemporary world, if not actually the most powerful of all.

Special Administration

We may inquire how the finances of the Church have evolved up to now. Before the Lateran Treaty the Vatican was already a considerable economic power, but in an area confined to Italy. But the financial stipulations of the treaty enabled the Holy See to modify its economic policy, and soon resulted in a rapid increase in material

IEWS AND OPINIONS

The Finances of the Vatican

Translated from the French

By F. A. RIDLEY

resources. For the Italian state had turned over to the Holy See a generous sum in compensation for the loss of the pope's temporal power (ended by the Italian occupation of Rome in 1870)—bank notes and state securities to a nominal value of a thousand million lire.

Pius XI had created a special administration for the express purpose of administering these funds which is under the special charge of that remarkable Italian financier, Bernardino Nogara. This administration launched the policy of international investment that culminated in the present financial situation. It was a policy characterised by exceptional foresight and prudence. This new body took over from "The Administration of the Goods of the Holy See", originally established by Leo XIII in 1878, after the Vatican economy had been transformed by the loss of Rome and of the papal states. And we may add in passing that the Vatican has played a leading part financially in the modernisation of Rome: banks, finance companies, gas, electricity, tramways; it is also largely concerned with the housing programme in present-day Italy.

The "Special Administration" obviously has numerous key agents, specialists in posts of trust, whose first duty is to observe an oath to maintain strict secrecy in relation to highly confidential affairs with which they are entrusted, a rule that is usually strictly enforced in the Roman Curia. The Administration business is aided by the unique position that it occupies in world affairs. For it is not responsible to any parliament or cabinet, or any kind of popular supervision. Above all, it transcends national frontiers and controls capital resources guaranteed in every part of the world, thanks to its highly effective "clearing" system and thanks to the special diplomatic facilities of which the Holy See, in its capacity as a sovereign state, is able to take full advantage. The Vatican has permanent facilities for acquiring information that enables it to assess and to manipulate the current financial situation.

World-wide Investments

The financial policy of the Holy See is under the supreme control of Bernardino Nogara, who is advised by a "brains trust" of financial experts, conspicuous among whom are the Italian Luigi Mennin and the Swiss Henri de Maillardoz. The funds, as well as the gold reserves, are located in numerous banks in both America and Europe, but particularly in Switzerland and England. Among the banks where the Vatican is a regular client, one may note the Jewish European banks of Rothschild Hambro and Samuel Montague, besides the Morgan Bank, one of the most important in the world.

In addition, the Vatican has its own financial institutions, over some of which at least it possesses an effective control. Among these are the Bank of the Holy Spirit founded in Rome in 1608, although nowadays the Holy See has only very limited connection with it. However, its director Marquis Giovambattista Sacchetti, is one of the highest dignitaries of the papal court. We may also mention the Bank of Rome, founded in 1808 (the Director of which, Signor Vittorino Veronese, is a leading figure in the Catholic Action Movement in Italy), the Società Generale Immobiliare (a building society whose director, Signor Eugenio Gualdi, is one of the most trusted collaborators of the Holy See, and whose vice-president, Signor Enrico Galeazzi, was an intimate friend of Pius XII and is one of the leading advisers of the Holy See on its economic policy). Amongst Immobiliare's directors is Signor Vittorio Valletta, controller of Fiat; and the society controls numerous companies and has extensive interests in transport and the tourist industry. For example, it owns three-quarters of the shares in the Roman Hilton Hotel.

The Vatican also possesses extensive interests in such societies and companies as Sogene, Pantanella, Biond (in Florence), Fingider, Bastoggi, Italpi; in the big insurance companies, Assicurazioni Generale, in Italgaz, Richard Ginori and Ceramica Pozzi. In more recent times, the Vatican has actively concerned itself with the business enterprises of the IRI of which it is at present the largest shareholder.

Just after the war, Canada and the United States were the then major fields of Vatican enterprise, but the Special Administration also invested both in the Casino of St. Remo and in Perrier Water in France. Nor did its preoccupation with such investments prevent it from looking further afield to Spain, Italy and Germany.

A special Vatican Bank, the Istituto per le opere di Religione, founded in 1942 by Pius XII with the express objective of preserving and administering the capital sums belonging to the religious orders, is the flexible intermediary which co-ordinates all these numerous financial activities. Cardinal Amleto Cicognani, the Vatican Secretary of State, controls this co-ordination under the supreme direction of Cardinal di Jorio. And it is Cardinal Cicognani who is conducting the complex negotiations with the Italian Government on the question of Vatican exemption from taxation upon its dividends.

Immense Revenue: Vast Expenses

Its foreign and Italian dividends constitute a major source of the revenues of the Holy See. To which one can also add Peter's Pence, upon which the Pope draws when he wishes to assist poor dioceses and parishes, or the victims of catastrophe. Usually such assistance is not given publicly. However, in general its local resources barely suffice to meet both the extraordinary and the ordinary expenses of the Curia. Amongst such normal expenses, one must include the current cost of the central administration (that is, of the Curia itself) the upkeep of the papal embassies, legates etc., and of the entire diplomatic apparatus. Among its special expenses we note, for example, the enormous cost of the Vatican Council, as well as such special outlays as papal conclaves. And it is particularly necessary to take into consideration the enormous cost of the foreign missions, which are under the supreme control of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide, part of the Roman Curia. These missions absorb a substantial proportion of the pontifical revenues, including most of the collections that it organises throughout the globe.

So heavy is the drain upon its available funds that, despite its vast resources and the professional reluctance of the financial experts to draw upon its current holdings, the Holy See in this present era is often obliged to use some of its capital resources in order to meet its current obligations. This goes far to explain why the Vatican is at present so anxious to safeguard its rights and to secure a favourable outcome for itself in its present dispute with the Italian state over the question of its exemption from taxation where its Italian dividends are concerned.

[This article originally appeared on April 15th, 1965 in *Le Rivarol* under the signature St. M. It was reprinted in the French Freethought paper *La Raison* (July) from which Mr. Ridley's translation is taken.]

MODERN METAPHOR

Girls should never go alone to the flats of strange men or invite them to their own rooms, says the Bishop of Leicester, the Right Rev. Ronald Williams. He warns girls in his Diocesan Leaflet: "All virile men carry a tiger in their tank which, once out of control, can easily lead them into situations and actions they would not have contemplated in a calmer moment".

A Meditation on the Crucifix

By PHYLLIS GRAHAM

(Continued from page 255)

AND this macabre vision-in-reverse reveals yet another even darker, aspect of the Super-Blackmail. What the divine victim cannot extract from victimised man through love, shame, remorse and pity, can be looted from him by more sinister forces. Those who will not be coaxed must be coerced. And so we have fear, which we are assured is love's arch-enemy, yet which appears as the trump-card of the God of Love. It is, of course, no new thing that fear should be the basis of superstition. No marks to the Christian hocus-pocus for originality in that department. Its achievement lies in the unique combination of milk and honey with sulphur and brimstone, a banquet of gods somewhat difficult for merely human stomachs to digest. (Did any, I wonder, ever really accomplish it without at least a twinge of belly-ache?)

Well, our nun sincerely tries to. Whatever the weakness of her human feelings, she subscribes with all the fervour of her faith to the inhuman revelation: her Lord as the implacable gaoler of a prison sans pardon, sans pity and sans end. Eternal Love, it appears, can contain its antithesis. Eternal Hate is its necessary complement, the reverse side of the shining orb of justice. The very scales of justice demand a Hell wherewith to balance Heaven. That is logic (Scholastic, of course) and there the faithful soul can reasonably follow. It becomes more difficult and painful on the personal plane. Can one look sincerely in the eye a lover whose right hand plays the charming melody, "Love me as I love you", while his left thunders in the bass, "Love me not and you burn eternally"? Disconcerting, to say the least. Yet even to her Bluebeard the nun must be loyal. There may be millions of victims in his gruesome cupboards, but with faith, hope and charity and a bit of holy luck she may rely on retaining his favour and escaping their most horrifying fate. (Which, consoling thought, they have deserved). Curiously, contemplation of the Auschwitz of Eternity does not seriously affect her with nausea. Perhaps because the idea is too frankly, too grotesquely, too naively horrid to be real. She believes, yes: (doesn't the Creed say, "He descended into Hell?") but with her lips, parrot-fashion, keeping her heart separate, letting her mind go numb. (There have been those who could find no anaesthetic. There still are. Either they persevere in anguish until death, or risk all and get a divorce from Bluebeard).

But with whatever innocent diplomacy our nun conducts her eschatological affairs, fear there is and fear remains, the inescapable skeleton at the Feast of Love. Fear of the judgment after death, more dreadful than the fear of death itself. Fear of the torments of Purgatory, escaped only by a few perfect souls, and likened (by the best authorities) in all but duration to the agonies of Hell. Fear of the Last Judgment: the final stripping of the soul, exposing its most secret sins and vanities before the eyes of all. (As if, incidentally, anyone in a pickle like this would be particularly interested in anyone else's jam!) And always and everywhere, fear of offending God (a touchy character, by all accounts), of incurring his wrath and temporal punishment (a "judgment" always ready to hand); fear of the Church, who has always specialised in fear-therapy and remains the undisputed chief expert in the art. Her more spectacular operations in this field may be temporarily curtailed, but on the individual mind her pressures do not relax.

A simple but charming illustration is that of a child of my acquaintance who attends a Catholic primary school directed by nuns assisted by lay teachers. Fond of drawing (fortunately for the relief of a much-abused nervous system which might otherwise rebel) she spends much time composing pictures of the worlds to come, according to detailed accounts of those realms supplied by her teachers. I am not particularly impressed with the Paradisal ones, preferring Fra Angelico; but Hell and Purgatory are positively stunning. Absolutely orthodox and proper, in the best medieval style and Thomistically authentic, down to the last black devil, tail and horns complete, shovelling human fuel on to the eternal bonfire. They make me shiver quite realistically. And that is no exaggeration: for the child is all of nine years, and will grow up and marry and present the world with a bunch of little Papists . . . and so the unconquerable lunacy of brainwashed and brainwashers repeats itself ad nauseam.

What percentage of the neuroses that cram our mental hospitals and feed our prisons could be traced to fear generated in the gloom of the crucifix? How much has the rooted fear of hell-fire to do with the "secular" fears that harrow our tormented world and undermine our civilisation? Psychology may not come up with the answers, but I think it cannot, sincerely, ignore the questions. What is certain is that fear is the keynote of this distracted age . . . the declining years of the Christian era display, unmistakably, a character in accordance with the darker, more ferocious aspects of the gospel of sweetness and light. It is at least possible that the arch-fear, the impending doom of nuclear destruction, is itself the projection of that doomsday dread implanted and nurtured in our minds—conscious and unconscious—by the stark cruelty of Christian eschatology. I will go further—if I am hanged for it!—and postulate this dread, working its blind will in the collective unconscious, as the dark force perverting the glory of our advance in knowledge to destructive ends, driving us to an almost fatalistic acceptance of "the end of our world". It is a fact of terrible significance that the death-wish, the negation of all natural law, should be the final offspring of Christian culture; and that the power to realise it should be the ultimate gift to the world of the Christian peoples.

(Would the irony be too blatant in a suggestion that this "do-it-yourself" might be the delayed action of a long-term Christian dissatisfaction, a secret, nagging impatience with the failure of the Lord's insistent prophecies of doom?)

Guilt and fear being bedfellows, the unpleasant nature of their progeny should not astonish. Its name is legion, infecting our world like a swarm of hidden germs: but for want of any accurate nomenclature I "christen" this brood of misery by the twin titles of Gloom and Blood.

"Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean", sang Swinburne, "the world has grown grey from thy breath".

Indisputably true, but only half the truth. The colour-scheme is not confined to half-shades. Old Testament Jehovah had a crude, insatiable appetite for enemy slaughter and animal sacrifice; but his "Son" far outbid him with a subtler technique. By his gory demise he plunged the world into a bloodbath in which it still wallows. The sacredness of blood as a wiper-out of sin and a peace-offering to offended Divinity, an idea conceived in the bar-

(Continued on page 262)

This Believing World

IT WAS only to be expected that a biography would appear of Mrs. Jeane Dixon, the greatest "seer" the world has ever seen, since her "prophecy" of the murder of President Kennedy became known. It is written by Ruth Montgomery, and an abridged version appears in the *Reader's Digest* for August. From it we learn that Mrs. Dixon would or should have changed British history, for it appears that in 1945 she met Winston Churchill and begged him not to have an election then, for he would lose. For twenty years she correctly foretold all the American Presidential elections so it was child's play to foretell an English Parliamentary one. In fact, she was almost always right in all her "uncanny" predictions.

★

AS FAR as we have read the story, the only evidence for most of it is what she herself says; and nobody need be surprised that Mrs. Dixon's prophecy about our 1945 election was unknown to everybody before she told it 20 years after the event. We are not sure if there is any reference to Mrs. Dixon's premature prophecy of the death of the Beatles in an air crash; and we wonder what she now says about the Vietnam war? Has she "prophesied" its final outcome? Or has she coyly refused to "see" it "spiritually", or what? Here is her big chance—give us now what will inevitably happen if the war goes on, let us say for another three years? Incidentally Mrs. Dixon is a "devout Catholic".

★

WE HAD on TV recently (for the first time?) two reverend members of the Pentecostal Christians who figure in the Book of Acts. They were especially proud that they could speak in "strange tongues", though they failed to produce any "cloven tongues as of fire". The American member gave us an incomprehensible prayer, which we were assured was due to the "Spirit", and would be thoroughly understood by God Almighty, if by nobody else. The whole was an exhibition of crude superstition and credulity, and a perfect specimen of what the faith as given to the saints must have been.

★

THE STORY of the persecution of "witches" by the Christian Church is one of the most ghastly records of cruelty and torture to millions of men and women who had no more to do with the Devil and his imps than a new born babe. The Devil and his hell might be figments of distorted religious imagination, but a book—one of thousands—has just been published about them written by Gillian Tindall. Entitled *A Handbook of Witches*, it ignores, according to one critic "the basic reason of witchcraft" (*Psychic News*, 31/7/65). Perhaps this is because there is no basic reason but a conglomeration of reasons all of which played into the hands of the Christian Church bent, in its religious fury, on destroying all rivals. For that is what witchcraft was—a rival to Christianity.

★

BUT IT IS quite true that when the burnings and the hangings and the physical torture of witches finally ceased, modern Spiritualism emerged with its "familiar spirits", now called "spirit guides"; its "covens", called "circles" and so on; and we now get something like witchcraft under another name. In the past, evil had to be exorcised by priests and the modern expulsion of poltergeists requires similar prayers to God and Jesus. What earthly use witchcraft had in the past we never discovered. And the same applies to Spiritualism today.

Humanists Protest to Council

HAVERING Humanist Society has sent a protest to Havering Council over a £10 grant to a religious body.

The society complained in February, when it discovered that the council was giving the money to the Havering branch of the Christian Education Movement.

"We do not see why ratepayers' money should be used to help a particular group in this way", wrote secretary Don Baker.

On July 7th town clerk John Symons replied. "The council are required by statute to provide for the giving of religious instruction in their schools, and the grant of £10 . . . was regarded by them as likely to increase the understanding of the pupils, or some of them, of the fundamental principles of the Christian faith and the ability of the teachers, or some of them, to give instruction in that faith".

The Humanists hit back on Friday, when Mr. Baker told the town clerk by letter that his members "realise and deplore the fact that indoctrination in Christian principles is required by law in the schools administered by local authorities.

"We further deplore the fact that the Council has gone beyond the legal requirement and has used ratepayers' money for supporting the work of a particular group".

—*Hornchurch and Upminster Echo* (20/7/65)

[Readers who wish to support Mr. Baker's protest should write to the Town Clerk, London Borough of Havering, Town Hall, Romford, Essex]

Visit to Lewes

Nearly 70 members and friends of the National Secular Society and the Thomas Paine Society visited Lewes on Sunday, July 25th. They were met by Councillors Gordon Hoile and David Williams, who later conducted a tour of this historic Sussex town.

Mrs. E. Venton, Vice-President of the National Secular Society presided at a luncheon in the Bull House Restaurant, once the home of Thomas Paine. She introduced Christopher Brunel, Chairman of the Thomas Paine Society, who proposed a toast to the town. Mr. Brunel recalled that Lewes had been the home of two famous men of freedom—Thomas Paine and Thomas "Clio" Rickman. Paine had been a member of the Headstrong Club, a local debating society which met at the White Hart, also still standing, a short way along the street from the Bull House. Like Paine, Rickman was of Quaker origin and openly professed that he belonged to no sect of religion. "It may be some time before these two leading citizens of Lewes are commemorated on British postage stamps", Mr. Brunel said; but he added that the Postmaster-General was considering a suggestion that a stamp be issued next year to mark the 175th anniversary of the publication of Part I of Paine's *Rights of Man*. Meanwhile we could honour Lewes and its present leading citizens.

Replying, the Mayor of Lewes, Councillor A. C. Barber, JP, said he always considered that it was at Lewes where Paine learned his politics before going to America and contributing to the Declaration of Independence. Councillor Barber added that, later in the afternoon he would welcome the visitors at the Town Hall, where they could see the signatures of Paine in the town book, indicating that he had been on the body that then represented the town in the same way as the Council did today.

Councillor Hoile spoke of the tradition of democracy and protest that had existed for so long in Lewes, and Councillor Williams added further points about Lewes's pride in its history.

The remainder of the day was spent visiting buildings of historical interest. W.McI.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY. Every Friday, 8 p.m.: L. EBURY and J. A. MILLAR.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

Notes and News

THE June/July issue of the *New Zealand Rationalist and Humanist* contained a well-meaning but regrettable compliment to James Hervey Johnson, successor to the late Charles Smith as editor of the *American Truth Seeker*. Mr. Johnson may be "vigorous" and "well-known as a pamphleteer, publisher and writer", the fact remains that he is, like his predecessor, a fanatical racist. So the *Truth Seeker*, claiming to be the oldest freethought paper in the world, continues its Nazi-like anti-Semitic and anti-Negro policy. The *New Zealand Rationalist* wished Mr. Johnson "every success in his new position". We can only assume that that position is not plainly understood in New Zealand.

★

WE TURN from a misguided tribute to a deserved one—to a real Freethinker this time. The *American Rationalist* (July-August) printed excerpts from Chapman Cohen's *Almost an Autobiography*. Cohen, a former editor of this paper, saw freethought not as something to be accomplished once for all "as one elects a government". It is, he said, "the existence of a body of men and women who will decline to be ordered what to think, how they are to vote, or what they are to read, who will give their allegiance freely, but will insist on a retention of their intellectual independence". Assume that all religious beliefs are dead and forgotten, "this critical function of freethought, this assertion of the rights of the individual against the coercion of majorities, whatever form it may take, will always remain of incalculable value. The freethought fight may express itself on many levels but from the point of view of a genuine sociology it will always go on. It is something that lies more in achieving that in mere achievement. Against the drag of the past there should constantly be set the vision of the future".

★

LAST week at the London Mosque, the Ahmadiyya movement in Islam held its first European convention. By converting Christians to Islam, and converting Muslims to stricter adherence to the Koran, the movement hopes to

bring nations round to the true faith. And, while deeply disappointed by Pakistan, which it regards as a secular state, the movement claims to be making satisfactory progress in Europe. "Once we have our own society", Mr. Abdus Salam Madsen (a Danish schoolmaster convert) told the *Guardian*, (2/8/65), "we shall put our teachings into practice. I should think our first society, our first successful revolution might be in Scandinavia or Germany". The Imam of the Mosque, B. A. Rafiq agreed. The hopes for Scandinavia were based on "the growing membership of the movement there". The first meeting in Denmark was held in 1958. "Now there are 70 Danish members". But the leaders do not consider members to be the only standard. Their movement is growing while Christianity is declining.

★

THE historian Geoffrey Barraclough reviewed books by two "disciples of Luther" in the *New Statesman* (30/7/65): *In the Service of the Lord* by Otto Dibelius and *No Rusty Swords* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Politically far apart—Dibelius conservative and Bonhoeffer a Social Democrat—they were disciples of Luther in their attitude to the relations of church and state. Dibelius "had no qualms when the Nazis organised the Reich Church in 1933 (it 'presaged the dawning of a new era'); his objection was to Reich Bishop Müller". And it would be a mistake, Professor Barraclough said, to regard Bonhoeffer as "a root-and-branch opponent of the Nazi". As his English editor, Edwin Robertson, points out, for Bonhoeffer "the German Church struggle was not a political but a theological one". This is a fact, Professor Barraclough added, "of which historians of the German Resistance have commonly taken too little account".

★

"WITHOUT doubt", said Bonhoeffer, when he preached on the Jewish question in April 1933, "the Church has to recognise the state's ordinances good or bad". "We have learned from Dr. Martin Luther", said Dibelius preaching before Hindenburg at Potsdam a few weeks earlier, "that the church must not oppose the lawful public authority . . . not even when it governs sternly and ruthlessly". Dibelius claimed to have known nothing about Hitler's Jewish extermination policy until 1942, and "could do no more than transmit the news" to the Swedish Embassy in Berlin. He lived on to become first bishop (self-appointed) in the German Evangelical Church and a figure in the World Council of Churches. Bonhoeffer, who said in 1933 that "the Jewish question is one of the historical problems" about which "the state is justified in adopting new methods", was hanged in 1945. Two disciples of the anti-Semitic Luther.

★

LANJE GARDYEN reports from Montreal that religious communities in Quebec province will now have to pay corporation tax on any enterprises they own of a "commercial and competitive character". Revenue Minister Eric Kierans told the Legislative Assembly on July 13th, that an Order-in-Council had been approved, and would be applied from January 1st of this year. A clause releasing religious institutions from paying tax for previous years was described by Quebec Premier Lesage as "an act of mercy". But those religious institutions which operated competitive and commercial enterprises would, Mr. Kierans said, have to adopt "an adequate and distinct accounting system which will allow them to meet the requirements of the Treasury". Mr. Lesage indicated that the move was directed mainly at the Fides Publishing House in Montreal, a large and profitable concern which publishes books of all kinds and is run by the Dominican order.

A Meditation on the Crucifix

(Continued from page 259)

baric ages of primitive human emergence, now became a universal obsession. "The Precious Blood" dyed the thought—and too often the deeds—of the Church with a colour all too familiar and evocative to the bloodthirsty instincts of a savage race. If one side of the Christian coin was grey with gloom, the reverse was incarnadine with blood. And so indeed it has been down the centuries until this present day.

In the mind of our nun, who has led a sheltered life and had few opportunities for violence, the grey side naturally predominates. The reverse merely signifies "salvation through the Blood of the Lamb", the wine of sacrament the blood of martyrs. Red to her is roseate, the appeal of myth, poetry, sentiment, the "Romaunt de la Rose" of a soul sweetly "inebriated with the Blood of the Saviour". (She is, of course, the contemplative type of nun, chosen for the purpose of our Meditation; unlike her sisters of the hospitals and mission-fields she is not involved in the muck, blood and riot of the down-to-earth human arena). The grey side is the stuff of her life, the realities of her inhibited existence. It has educated her in the belief that earthly joys must be sacrificed to obtain the joys of Heaven; that natural instincts are always suspect and almost always evil, necessitating strict control and where possible complete suppression. Even the most innocent enjoyment ought not to be enjoyed for its own sake, but referred to the glory of the "Giver"; which in practical terms means not entering into the pleasure of a good dinner or an interesting book or a beautiful piece of music, but distracting one's inner attention from it to the contemplation of God and holy things. Even the sheer necessities of the body, such as hunger and thirst, should provide material for this perpetual discipline, so that one should not be too eager to satisfy them, but refrain as long as one reasonably can from drinking when one is thirsty, or put such brakes on one's greed as eating sugar with meat or boiled eggs without salt; in short, invent a thousand and one ways of ensuring that life is not worth living.

This lunatic behaviour is, of course, the extreme inner kernel of the spiritual nut; but the nuttiness has left an uncomfortable residue everywhere in the Christian—and the post-Christian—"conscience". Pure pleasure is as hard come by as pure gold; how few there are who attain it, or even suspect that it exists. Always, it seems, it must be tainted with a sense of secret guilt, half spoiled by an imagined duty of withdrawal, of dissociating oneself from the full enjoyment that could harm one's "purity", or "detachment", or "spiritual values", or whatever one calls the fetish. And from this zany anti-philosophy, sedulously nurtured by the zealots of the Church (though not always practised in perfection by some in high places) has arisen and developed a worship of the dark things of existence: pain, suffering, poverty, deprivation, grief: a worship of them as intrinsically good, acceptance of them as means of "salvation", "sanctification", "self-purification", "accomplishing the will of God", "uniting oneself with the sufferings of the Cross", etc, etc. Obviously this has all been very handy for those in power who wished to remain so, and who could thus count (generally speaking) on the submission and patience of the powerless under whatever abominable conditions were presented to them as instruments of a benign Providence. In this modern world of ours such reliance on the safeguard of the Divine Grace idea as supreme mob-moulder and mob-controller cannot,

it is clear, be placed with such light-hearted confidence. But there are still vast areas of human passivity where it is a good risk, even a fair proposition. The gloom of the shadow of the cross has unaccustomed man to the sunlight. There are herds of human crosslings who, like animals released from a lifetime in captivity, simply wouldn't know what to do or how to live with freedom.

Assuming that our nun has some intelligence, it is more than possible that certain awkward questions may occur to her from time to time, particularly when times are not so good and temporal limitations clip her flights to the eternal. Even drastic doubts as to the sanity of the whole set-up to which her life is self-condemned may assault her reason and rack her emotions. But, unless she is one of those exceptional individuals destined to repeat the role of Judas, she will treat all such overtures of freedom as sins against faith, dissociate herself from them with a fury of rejection, and dig herself into her cage with all the more heartfelt zeal. As we have insisted, her behaviour-pattern, though extreme in form, is characteristic of the "crucifix-mentality" and the normal reaction-ground of cross-idolatry.

But beneath these ordinary levels there are depths she will never know, regions she will never be called upon or forced to enter—unless some unforeseen cataclysm disrupts her ordered universe and disintegrates her world. These depths are the habitat of the darker and the darkest forces operating in the bowels of that mystery we know as the religion of the Cross. Here are conceived those monstrous aberrations, those incomprehensible urges, those violent lusts that pale mere human passion, which have their explosive birth in crimes and cruelties beyond the realm of unredeemed man.

For, faith-inspired, they are, presumably, "born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And from our knowledge of Jehovah we can almost believe it. Yet surely even that irascible and slaughterous old tyrant would have stopped short of a double millenium of Jew-baiting, seeing he had a soft spot for those incorrigible but elect *enfants-terribles*? Deserving as they seemed to him of punishment, would even he have thrown them by the million into concentration camps to starve, rot and perish; dragged them naked to the gas-chambers and incinerated them dead, dying or horribly alive, in crematorium ovens; flogged, strangled, shot and buried them in still breathing piles among the garbage of blackening corpses; subjected them to the last extremities of indignity and degradation; wiped out their children and their infants with meticulous care in case they should live to take revenge? Accustomed as he was to ordering the wholesale slaughter of men, women, children and cattle, I am inclined to believe that his tough old heart would have relented at the excess of the misery and shown them mercy.

But one cannot postulate as much for his successor, the "God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ", to whom belongs the unique distinction and the unenviable patent of the invention of eternal damnation. By harsh evidence he specialises in torture, and, having a deistic advantage over Hitler and Co. in torture of eternal duration. The spectacle of a few million Jews—or for that matter of a few million Orthodox Christians and others—being done to death in circumstances that reduce the drama of the Crucifixion to the status of a soap-opera, must surely appear to his satiated sadism like the squashing of a few flies on a window-sill. Small wonder, then, that from the

children of his Son's "redemption" there was no mercy. That from the "Vicar of Christ on earth" there was not one cry of protest or a single gesture of pity. To the illustrious sons of the Twisted Cross, lay and clerical, prelate and military, who organised this last and ultimate demonstration of the crucifix-mentality, "the quality of

mercy", "strained" or otherwise, was entirely unknown.

Thus had the Christian horror-story, hardening in the minds of men through twenty centuries of guilt, fear, gloom and blood, worked itself out to its monstrous but logical dénouement.

(To be Continued)

Where Stands Josephus?

By H. CUTNER

IN THE COURSE of my "Jesus a myth" propaganda, which began very early in my work as a Freethought writer, the one name I have had hurled at me by Jews, Christians, Rationalists, and Ethicists alike, is Josephus, who, they declared, stood firm as a rock against the myth theory. How could Jesus possibly be a myth when he is mentioned by Josephus as having been put to death by Pontius Pilate?

In the course of a controversy which, for me has lasted for over 40 years, I have read dozens of books on Josephus and his celebrated history, read dozens of articles for and against him and his account of Jesus, and I can honestly say that very few of the "pro-Josephus" supporters ever touched upon the essential argument at all.

Now, either the passage in Josephus about Jesus is genuine *as it stands*, or it is not. I have not read one supporter of it who insists that as we have it, it is completely genuine. Most of them claim that it has probably superseded something uncomplimentary to Jesus, and therefore had to be re-written, possibly with additional clauses. But this does not make it a forgery: it is at worst an "interpolation". There always was a passage about Jesus, but the Christian gentleman who was responsible for the copy translated by Whiston, deleted what he did not like, and added his own clauses. And that should end all discussion.

The passage in Josephus has, of course, become more and more necessary for Christians, because without it and the passage in the *Annals* of Tacitus, there is no evidence anywhere that there ever was a Jesus; no proof that the Son of God ever existed! Actually, there are no contemporary references whatever to a God going about Palestine "doing good"—not even in that Jewish repository of myth and legend, the Talmud.

Thus, when Dupuis in his monumental work, *The Origin of all Worship*, bluntly said that no Son of God had ever existed, that the story of Jesus in the Gospels was based in the main on sun-worship, Christian scholars all over the world had to find some near-contemporary reference to their saviour, and found it in Josephus. Or they believed they had. For it was obvious to anybody who thought the matter out that Josephus could not have written the passage if he was, as he claimed, a good Jew. As John E. Remsburg says in his book, *The Christ*:

Its language is Christian. Every line proclaims it the work of a Christian writer. "If it be lawful to call him a man". "He was the Christ". "He appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him". These are the words of a Christian, a believer in the divinity of Christ . . . Its brevity disproves its authenticity. Josephus's work is voluminous and exhaustive. It comprises twenty books. Whole pages are devoted to petty robbers . . . Yet this remarkable being, the greatest member of his race, . . . a being greater than any earthly king is dismissed with a dozen lines.

Even Christian scholars had to admit that *logically* the paragraph preceding the disputed passage and the one following could not be separated. The fraud was evident at a glance. So it was argued that Josephus had originally

written something else not complimentary to Jesus, and some Christian writer had changed it.

Nearly all the Christian authorities and biographers of Jesus—Dr. Lardner, the Rev. Dr. Giles, the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, Bishop Warburton, Theodore Keim, etc.—concur with Canon Farrar. There *may* have been a different paragraph, there *must* have been one in which Jesus is at least mentioned; otherwise we Christians are sunk. And a number of Rationalists such as A. D. Howell-Smith, Dr. F. C. Conybeare and Archibald Robertson have adopted a similar position.

Exactly how much of the text of Josephus can be trusted no one knows. Who were his authorities, no one knows. Even what he saw himself during the war waged by Vespasian and Titus. How much could he have known outside his immediate surroundings? Personally, I mistrust most of his figures. But by concentrating on the interpolation, if it really was one, some other points come to mind. How is it that Josephus *never* refers to that famous dozen or so of Apostles, the devoted followers of Jesus? And why is there not a hint in his writings about Peter and Paul, whose adventures form so detailed a part of the early Christian story? Did he never meet the numerous Jewish converts who accepted Jesus not only as a God and the Son of God, but also as their own particular Messiah, the Christ? If any part of this were true, Josephus would surely have noted it. Yet this extraordinary omission is hardly ever touched upon by defenders of the celebrated passage.

Though Gibbon, our greatest historian, believed in the actual existence of a man Jesus—his two famous chapters in his *Rise and Decline* annihilate any pretension to Christianity being "divine"—he had no illusions at all about the Josephus passage. He bluntly declared it to be "an example of no vulgar forgery", and said it was probably inserted into the text "between the time of Origen and Eusebius". Christians do not like the word "forgery", which explains their use of "interpolation", though this has the same meaning. You can see this in Dean Milman's comment on Gibbon—"It is interpolated with many additional clauses".

The letter in THE FREETHINKER (July 23rd) by the Rev. C. Strother FAES is typical of the careless way in which so many Christians like to quote books they don't even bother to read. He says that on page 3 of my book, *Jesus—God, Man or Myth*, I "all but admit that behind the Gospels there is an historic figure". If that is so why did I write another 290 pages to show that Jesus was not historical? Actually, I quoted Dupuis's opinion, and Mr. Strother quietly transferred that to me. I have never wavered in my opinion that there is no historical figure whatever in Jesus, who is as much a myth as Jupiter.

Finally, Dr. A. Larson, who is mentioned by Mr. Strother as saying that the Josephus passage was genuine, knows very little about the myth theory. Incidentally, does Mr. Strother really accept the New Testament literally?

CORRESPONDENCE

HISTORICITY OF JESUS

In his letter dealing with the problem of the historicity of Jesus, the Rev. C. Strother sees fit to quote a book which I wrote some thirty years ago in defence of a modernistic Catholic view of sacramental religion. I quite fail to see how his citation is to the point. I there contended, as I should still, that the doctrine of the Incarnation lies at the heart of historic Christianity. Belief could evolve in the incarnation of a mythical God who lacked historicity just as an historic figure could become a mythical "hero" of religious legend. Perhaps I might point out that my own views have changed and ripened with the years and that, for many years, I should repudiate what I there wrote and would maintain a secularistic viewpoint. Perhaps I might also contend, *pace* Mr. Strother, that some such intellectual development is natural if one continues to apply canons of historical criticism to the origins of religion.

If Mr. Strother cares to continue his researches, he will find various things by myself written from a religious standpoint at past stages of my own mental evolution. But perhaps he will help me with a little research concerning present standpoints. I notice that he signs himself "the Rev." although I cannot find his name in the ministerial list of any accredited denomination. Is this due to an oversight on my part which he can correct or are his attachments to some group which publishes no such list? If so, what is the origin of his ministerial qualification, episcopal or otherwise? Can he tell me the significance of "FAES", a designation which I fail to identify and cannot trace? What is the St. Osmund's Society? What is its membership and who are its officers? Are any of its members of recognised academic standing or qualification? I am far from asserting that there is any curious mystery about these matters but, as Mr. Strother chooses to quote myself of some thirty years ago in aid of his present propositions, I should be glad to have some answer to them as I should also be interested to know in what place of worship he exercises his ministry.

F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT.

GERMAN HUMANIST UNION

I find among your Notes and News a few sentences on the German Humanist Union. This is no "organisation of intellectual atheists", as the *Catholic Herald* reported. True it has wide support among intellectuals, students and professors. However, practising Catholics are there to be found as well as Protestants of all denomina-

tions. What unites these opposing forces is anti-clericalism in a predominantly Catholic country, erected and governed by a clique of fierce and almost neurotic anti-communists. The Humanist Union, because of its strict anti-communist tendency—humanism ends at the Iron Curtain—has the possibility of some activity under the constitution (*Grundgesetz*). Members of the *Freigeistige Bewegung* rationalist movement—may be found among those of the *Humanistische Union*. *Szczesny* himself lives at Munich, a one million-inhabitant town with one-third Protestant population due to immigrants from the north after the last war. While the *Freigeistige Bewegung* is a small group (60-80 members) of no effect under the leadership of a lyrical interested man by the name of Mr. Alexander, and the *Freethinker* group is as poor—approximately 100 members, with some militant communists and up to 80 per cent old people. The Humanist Union is active among students—thousands of them—and artists, a considerable group at Munich.

I for my part have connection with groups of the HU both at Nürnberg as well as Munich. There are a lot of people in this country who no longer belong to the Churches, or if still members hate their militant intruding into politics everywhere. Besides, the publishing house connected with the movement publishes books otherwise unprinted in this country. The intellectual club established is called Club Voltaire, and offers forum discussions.

GERDA GUTTENBERG, (Nürnberg).

ORDINATION

I read in the North London newspaper, the *Hornsey Journal* of July 23rd, 1965 that: "During Pontifical Mass at the Old Roman Catholic Church, Highbury, the Rev. R. W. Morrell, of Notting-ham, was ordained to the sub-diaconate".

Can this possibly be the same R. W. Morrell who is secretary of the Thomas Paine Society? I can hardly believe that it is, but the initials are the same and I know Mr. Morrell lives in Notting-ham.

D. P. HARRIS.

[We regret to say that Mr. Harris is right. Mr. Morrell has, we understand, joined the Old Roman Catholic Church—Ed].

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A CURIOUS case, *In re G, Infants*, (*The Times*, July 29th 1965), has just reached the Court of Appeal and should not be without interest to Freethinkers. In 1950, Mr. G married Mrs. G. The husband was a non-Catholic whilst the wife was a member of the Roman Catholic Church. There were three children and it was agreed that they should be brought up as Roman Catholics. In 1962, Mr. G left the matrimonial home to live in adultery with Mrs.

X. As a result, Mr. X was granted a divorce which took effect in March 1964. Mrs. G refused to divorce her husband upon religious grounds, took proceedings before the magistrates and obtained custody of the children. Mr. G was granted a limited access to them on condition that they were not brought into touch with Mrs. X. In another series of wardship proceedings, since in his case the divorce had become absolute, Mrs. X was allowed to have her children to stay with her. Mr. G now tried to obtain an order from the Court of Appeal conceding the same permission to his two eldest children. The appeal was dismissed on the grounds that the failure of Mrs. G to obtain a divorce suggested a state of continuing adultery and that this was a serious matter as the children were brought up as Roman Catholics.

Religious Motive

Lord Justice Salmon agreed upon the religious grounds with Lord Justice Willmer though stressing that, since *Vard v. James*, (1962) (2 WLR455), there could be no doubt that the Court of Appeal had a discretionary power to vary an order made originally by the justices. Lord Justice Winn agreed though suggesting that, if he had been called upon to exercise the discretion, he was far from certain that he would have exercised it in the same way. Mr. G therefore lost his appeal from the original refusal to interfere with the justices by Mr. Justice Buskley in the court below. The result is that the couple, Mr. G and Mrs. X may have Mrs. X's children to stay with them but that the same concession cannot apply to Mr. G's two eldest children.

Treating the matter from the angle of ordinary life, the decision is clearly unsatisfactory and can scarcely make for the desirable emotional readjustments necessary in the general tangle, so far as the two families of children are concerned. But there are also other considerations to be taken into account which go beyond this point. There can be no doubt that the Court of Appeal is correct in law. It has a legal discretion in the matter and it has an absolute discretion as to the manner in which this shall be exercised. But, in view of the results produced in the present case, it does seem desirable that some more detailed position should be reached with regard to the rules by which this discretion shall be operated. Both Lord Justice Willmer and Lord Justice Salmon took into consideration the fact that these children were being brought up as Roman Catholics. Lord Justice Salmon said that he spoke with diffidence in religious matters but he pointed out that, in any assessment of adultery, it would have made no

difference if the children had been brought up as Anglicans; "he was certain that adultery was not looked on more favourably in one religion than another". The final decision of the court was clearly guided by this religious motive.

It cannot be gainsaid that the Court of Appeal was within its rights in allowing itself to be so guided in the present case. But grave issues are thereby raised. In itself, adultery does not fall within the ambit of the criminal law. Its major concern is as a matrimonial offence and the damages which the divorcing husband may receive from the correspondent belong historically more properly to the law of matrimony than to that of tort. They are clearly related to

feudal and property considerations rather than to outraged feelings or tortious damage. The most that could be said is that irregular sexual relationships are illicit at civil law and that no contract could be based upon them. The common law of England since the early years of the last century has refused to concern itself with the conception of a supervening moral or natural law but is chiefly concerned with the objective application of the general will of the body politic. Transcendent moral consideration would seem therefore to be alien to a case of this type and to be in danger of cutting deeply into the conception of the absolute supremacy of Parliament, which lies at the root of the British Constitution. With respect, it may therefore be submitted that, in view of the gradual elimination of such legacies from the common law, it is a pity that the Lord Justices allowed vestiges of the older conceptions of natural law to raise a ghostly form in the present case. Dealt with objectively, the sole issue would seem to be the well-being of the children concerned and the desirability of a full emotional and paternal contact with the father, a contact which incidentally would be permitted if Mrs. G divorced her husband and he married Mrs. X legally. In other words, religious consideration on the part of Mrs. G again bedevil the whole picture.

Canon Law and Common Law

But it is likewise serious that the question of Roman Catholic teaching has also come in. As in so many other cases, the G marriage in 1950 would have seemed to suggest all of the tensions and strains which attend a mixed marriage. It must take place in a Roman Catholic church and agreements concerning the future religious teaching of the children must be entered upon. These dictates are based upon the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church and frequently bear considerable weight with the many who have no legal training. The Roman Catholic Church is of course the last body to point out that its much-vaunted Canon Law has no validity of any sort in the eyes of the law of England. In cases concerning foreign elements, it does not rank as a foreign legal system which has a right to be accounted where relevant. Any appeal to Canon Law is absolutely null and void in the eyes of English common or Statute Law. It might be asked whether the religious bargain made at the marriage was

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Roman Catholicism and the Law

A Practical Example

By F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

not invalid on account of undue influence, whilst it certainly has no legal significance. Anybody who has been put into this position owing to the stresses of the moment, has a perfect legal right to ignore it for the future. Again, it is not all clear that, with all respect to the opinion of a very eminent judge, the cases of Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism stand on the same footing. So far as the United Kingdom be concerned, the Anglican Church has, as Sir Alan Herbert and others have pointed out, a very mixed history with regard to divorce and remarriage. The Court seemed to consider that the divorce of Mrs. X brought to an end the marriage of Mr and Mrs. X, with the result that her children might fittingly visit her. So far as she is concerned, it is now impossible on her side for her any longer in law to commit adultery. But this is not the position of the Roman Catholic Church which would not recognise the divorce as existing with the implications which it carries. It might, however, be the position of some members of the Church of England to concede this recognition. Once again, a tangle arises which becomes very relevant if the court looks upon Mrs. G's private religious convictions together with the religious upbringing of her children as other than a wholly private matter.

Constitutional Danger

Once again, it must be stressed that the Roman Catholic Church in England is not the established church. It is a mere episcopal set-up which is in fact a private dissenting body. For some centuries, it was visited with legal penalties because its main propositions were looked upon as endangering the constitutional state in England. These penalties were mainly removed in 1829 and the last legacies disappeared in 1927. But it was the penalties which disappeared; Parliament did not unsay the motives which had originally prompted their imposition. The ordinary citizen is still justified in looking upon this body as something which, by trying to be an *imperium in imperio*, is endangering the constitutional position in this country. It is at least justifiable to claim that the allegiances adopted by members of this body, or their moral assessments of conduct, are their own private concern and that these should in no way hamper the discretion to be exercised by an English court of law. In the same way, the attitude of Mrs. G over divorce illustrates the confusion which prevails in English divorce law and the very real harm that has been done by taking into consideration Roman Catholic claims when Parliament has sought to estimate these matters in practice.

Objective and Secular Law

A general conclusion may be permitted. It is that the present case is an excellent illustration of what must happen in a democratic state when religious teaching is permitted to become entangled with the administration of the law. Religious beliefs should be regarded as a private matter, and the intervention of the state should be upon a purely secular plane, guided by the purely objective and secular claims of the law. The case of Mr. G affords yet further encouragement to strive for the secularisation of society and of the state as representing society upon its governmental side. Perhaps it may be added that it is also a warning against mixed marriages. Where these arise, it is customary for the Roman Catholic Church to exercise far-reaching demands. It is just as much in order, and possibly even more legal, for the non-Catholic party to make a series of counter-demands upon his side. Of one thing he may be sure. If he is weak enough to give way to the demands of the Roman Catholic Church, he is not improbably sowing dragon's teeth which will reap a whirlwind harvest at some time in the future.

The Devil-Tamer of St. Mark's

By F. H. SNOW

MY CHIEF grievance is that I was born a lot too soon. One reason for that grievance is the mentality of the television-viewing public. For I feel sure that the broadcasting people would not dare risk insulting the intelligence of their customers with such stuff as was filmed in *Our Man at St. Mark's* on July 19th, if they had cause to rate it at all highly. I have generally liked the series whose principal character is an honest and genial Church of England vicar, but feel that those viewers who have the capacity to think in accordance with the popular conception of modern reasoning, will agree with me that the denouement of this particular episode was an intellectual disgrace.

Does the ITV directorate really credit its public with intelligence so low as to deserve being offered rank superstition for its mental delectation, as was the case when the devil-worshippers quailed at sight of the cross displayed by the Man at St. Mark's, and dropped on their knees in abject submission? Was this incident designed to present the medieval Christian belief in the ability of the clergy to exorcise the Devil, as holy truth? Apparently those responsible for the kind of fare prescribed for the viewing public are still ignorant of the fact that belief in Hell is virtually moribund. It is rarely, if ever, referred to from the pulpit, and the normal person regards the place of everlasting burning as a joke. And how, if there's no Hell, the domain of the damned where the Devil presides and resides, can there be a Devil, or devils, to be exorcised?

The mere display of the vicar's chief ornament so scared Satan that he shrank into the shoes of his devotees, and skedaddled when the Man of God and St. Mark's pronounced the exorcising formula. Down on their knees went the devil-worshippers, with terrible fear on their faces, and the triumph of the Cross was complete. The story inferred the Devil's reality and the truth of the hoary belief that the confronting of him with a cross had power to make him quail. It assumed his taking possession of persons and that clergymen could rid them of him by uttering a certain form of words. It had a distinctly propagandist complexion and was undoubtedly aimed at the intellectual paupers who, in the evident view of its sponsors, preponderate amongst television viewers.

I think it highly unlikely that those who put on this show would confess to belief in what it implied, and take the view that they were just unscrupulous in the matter, so long as religion was given a boost. It seems to be a case of "everything goes" with regard to superstitious nonsense, despite the fact that there would be many children watching the programme. Indeed, the possibility of children, as well as adults of childlike mentality, being impressed in favour of religious belief, however nonsensical would certainly gratify those responsible for the episode.

Just where are we going, in this advanced age? I charge the television authorities with hindering the progress of rational thought concerning beliefs which science and common sense condemn as absurd. They feature much that is instructive, but in the field of religion pander to the primitive. They all but prohibit the voice of free-thought from being heard through their medium. They load the dice so heavily against atheism that the case against the reality of God, Heaven, angels and even devils, is kept from the ears of the television public. They treat their viewers as children, where religion is concerned. By all means, let us have stories like *Our Man at St. Mark's*

(Concluded on page 268)

A Meditation on the Crucifix

By PHYLLIS GRAHAM

(Continued from page 263)

ALAS, the story is not ended. We are still in the throes of this denouement. And we cannot know what twist of fate will resolve it for us—or against us.

However, minds that have freed themselves from the slavery to "revealed truth" which is the root cause of muddled thinking and its inexhaustible crop of evils, can at least examine our situation objectively. It is clear to them that this total collapse on the world front of the "Christian morality" persona has exposed without mercy the real schizophrenic character of Christianity. This violent disintegration of the system of ethics which has formed our culture and held our society together, by dubious means but with passable efficiency, is directly caused by disruptive forces inherent in its nature. For beneath the facade of "peace and goodwill" has always worked "not peace, but a sword". Behind the smiling mask of "God so loved the world" glares the Eichmann horror of "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire". And so, logically and unsurprisingly, beneath the surface beauty of Christian culture have bred and multiplied and flourished the vandal forces that negate human values. History is littered with the ruins of their frequent and inevitable eruptions, which the saner elements in Christian consciousness have been powerless to suppress. "A city divided against itself . . .". And this was a city half built on the shifting sands of infantile concepts, half on the volcanic ground of power-hungry passions. As the former weakened before the onslaught of new knowledge and mental freedom, so the latter strained more desperately towards the final cataclysm that destroyed them together.

For they are destroyed, as a living whole, even if their haunting ghosts still try to get a grip on the world of flesh and blood. Their appalling end has demonstrated too clearly that no system of morality based on infantile concepts and ruling by dictatorship can ever again dominate our intelligence so disastrously; still less could it ever cement our societies, heal our international relations, give coherent unity to world politics. Unless indeed history repeats itself in another total eclipse as fatal as the shadow of the cross that blotted out the sun of man's achievements two thousand years ago and once again *Homo sapiens* is reduced to the state of infancy and the need for infant diet. Putting aside this grim threat of possibly even more hopeless regression (atomic assaults may leave him, for instance, a raving lunatic) it is clear that only sane philosophy and Humanist ideals in practice can cater for him at his present age.

But a further insight awaits this clarity of vision in unbiassed minds. The impact of it is grave, terrible. There is a horrifying sense in which vanquished Christianity is the victor, for while its defeat has set us free from the "moral" side of its split personality, the profound immorality of its darker depths has bequeathed itself to us in the very moment of its self-destruction. It placed in our hands the ultimate weapon of the Church Militant, that principle inherited from Jehovah, practised with such zeal throughout the history of Judeo-Christianity, brought to such perfection in the religio-political struggle of the Second World War: namely, the grandly simple policy of mass-extermination.

No sooner was it placed in our hands than we used it.

We too became the victims of the psychopathic underworld of that Nazi-Fascist system which has mis-shaped our destinies for twenty centuries. Our final retaliation on the German cities, all pretence of bombing military targets abandoned for the sole aim of wiping out populations, was the first-fruits of our deadly inheritance. With the unequivocal total-massacre of Hiroshima we entered into the full recognition of our legatee-ship. The mantle of the Nazis fell upon us with all the mystical solemnity of that old yet startlingly new in its modern interpretation: "Thou shalt not kill . . . but ye shall slaughter with limitless ferocity on as cosmic a scale as your evolving power-knowledge shall enable you".

Thus it is clear that the very disintegration of this evil system—which I equate with the "crucifix-mentality"—has thrown up evils more appalling than the viciousness of its apparent self. And it is also tragically evident that the days of its power are not over; that the more deeply sinister elements from its subterranean darkness have erupted to the surface of our world scene and are very much alive. "The evil that men do lives after them . . .". What then of that sum-total of evil which is the legacy of millions of men, of generations, of centuries of generations? For systems are nothing but the thought-forms and the thought-conformings of multitudes of men. No wonder then that our excruciated century of transition should be faced with a legacy of evil so all-pervading and so ghoulishly alive.

Our Meditation on the Crucifix has led us along sombre paths. More sombre, and certainly more meaningful, than the imaginings of our little nun, which skim the surface symbolism of the guilt-fear-gloom-and-blood image that she holds in her hand, but have not the faintest perception of the guilt-fear-gloom-and-blood realities it has stamped on our world.

Nevertheless, as I watch her, observing on her rapt face the reflection of her fervent but misplaced devotion, it occurs to me that this unprofitable contemplation could indicate, to us who are free, a way of action. That perpetual shaping and moulding of her personality on the idea of God which she calls prayer, and which indeed has power to shape and mould human disaster, since the God to whom she prays is the cruellest of the gods; does it not suggest to us an inner process by which we too could accumulate power, towards an altogether antithetic end?

We who have attained mental freedom, and long to share this priceless treasure with all our fellow men, so often feel stunned and helpless beneath the colossus of ancient imbecility that bestrides our world. There seems so little we can do, individually or collectively, to shake off this Old Man of the Sea whose burden grows heavier on the bowed minds of men as they struggle through deep waters to what appears inevitable doom. We do all we can, through any active means open to us; but our very concept of freedom forbids and prevents us from impressing it with any kind of force on the minds of others, even—to borrow that most noxious of dogmatic excuses—"for their own good".

But there is surely a way, a quiet way, serene and confident in that inner citadel of our own possession commanding the vistas of illimitable freedom.

(Continued on page 270)

This Believing World

IT IS worth noting that the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, though both practising Christians, leave God Almighty out of their speeches. There was a time when our Parliamentarians hardly ever spoke on what they were going to do for the country without bringing into their speeches, "with God's help", or "praise the Lord", or "thanks to Jesus", or some other similarly divine expression. But these days it is Secularism which holds the field. Both Government and Opposition alike emphasise that what they want is the good of the people here and now. And this is exactly what secularism has always stood for. Here and now and not "up there" in the future.

★

WE NOTE—not without a little amusement—that the Bishop of Southwark "welcomes" the promotion of Dr. Cowderoy, who is the Roman Catholic Bishop of Southwark, to Archbishop. Dr. Stockwood wants his Anglican congregation to meet the Roman Catholic one as often as possible (*Daily Express*, 2/8/65) and hopes a similar friendship "will spread to every parish". We cannot help wondering whether Dr. Cowderoy is just as enthusiastic about it?

★

THE Roman Church has, and always has had, one object in view with the Anglican Church. It is to devour it. There cannot be two masters in the Christian household. The Church has never really changed on this. A Roman bishop could meet an Anglican bishop quite courteously of course, but when it comes to meeting each other not socially but on the Christian religion—that is quite a different kettle of fish.

★

ANYONE who has visited Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park in the past, particularly before the last war, will have noticed how little love was lost between the speakers for various sects of Christians, and how violence, if there was any, was mostly against unbelievers. Nowadays, as the *Daily Mail* (3/8/65) has remarked, it is the racial question which may well break out in "physical violence". Lord Soper, who knows Speakers' Corner, warned the House of Lords about it. "There were now there", he pointed out "as many coloured as there were European people". But—and this is interesting—"And there were as many people inciting to racial hatred or discrimination the colour of whose skin was dark, as there were those who were similarly inciting to racial hatred others whose skin was white".

★

IN OTHER words, when it comes to tolerance of other people's views, about the only ones who really practised it were the Freethinkers and Rationalists, precisely because they put reason before religion or race. Nothing breeds intolerance as much as religion or racism.

★

SOME MONTHS ago (*Daily Express* 31/12/64), the then mere Rev. Dr. Donald Soper's great "dream" was "to ban the Bible". Now that he is Lord Soper, has he suggested this to the House of Lords? "The present situation with regard to the Scriptures is intolerable" he says. We are not quite sure what he means. Does he mean that the Bible is no longer God's Precious Word for the Salvation of Mankind—or what? He does suggest that the Bible "represents an intellectual incubus"; and he calls for a "new start" to be made with "this most controversial document". But "new starts" have been constantly made with the Bible, and they generally end up at the same

place. If he really wants to make some headway, however, his Lordship might inform the Upper House of the new start made by Thomas Paine in *The Age of Reason*.

The Greatest Story Ever Told?

JOSEPH LEWIS, Editor of the American *Age of Reason* magazine, reports in its May-June issue that, some years ago, when his book *The Bible Unmasked*, was first published, he received a most cordial letter from Fulton Oursler, praising the work.

Shortly after, Fulton Oursler became a "convert" to a particular religion and proceeded to write a book, using the same text and quotations from the Bible which Mr. Lewis had done, but with the opposite conclusion! Fulton Oursler called his book *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, and he made an enormous sum of money out of the sales.

Here is the text of Fulton Oursler's letter to Mr. Lewis, written in his own handwriting:—

My dear Lewis:

Thanks for writing *The Bible Unmasked*. I hope you will write more like it. One of the greatest New York book retailers told me last night your book was filthy and he would not order it—not realising that all the filth is quoted from the Bible. I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you sometime.

Cordially,

FULTON OURSLER.

When Fulton Oursler's book was published, Mr. Lewis sent him a letter, asking the question: "What Price Fulton Oursler?" He received no answer.

Several years ago, it was publicly announced, that Carl Sandburg had been commissioned to write the scenario for the motion picture of *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. Upon learning of this, Mr. Lewis wrote Mr. Sandburg the following letter:—

Dear Mr. Sandburg:

It is with much regret we have to remind you of what you are undertaking in helping produce *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. Creating this mythical character was the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the human race, setting civilisation back two thousand years. Now, without realising what you are doing, you are setting it back another century by glamourising it in technicolour. It's unthinkable that a man of your intellect can believe this mythical tale of Jesus. Pope Boniface VIII confessed it a fake by stating: "What profit hath not this fable of Jesus brought to us".

Sincerely yours,

JOSEPH LEWIS.

Shortly after the receipt of this letter, says Mr. Lewis "there appeared in the press an item, to the effect, that Mr. Sandburg had relinquished this lucrative assignment". But Mr. Lewis adds, "Now that the picture has finally been made, another cruel hoax has been perpetrated upon the people".

THE DEVIL-TAMER OF ST. MARK'S

(Concluded from page 266)

Parsons are so often jolly good fellows, but Freethinkers must fight with unrelaxing energy against their being made the vehicle for forcing superstition down the mental gullets of television watchers.

I regret indeed having been born long in advance of the time when audiences of the broadcasting services will have been emancipated from religious brainwashing. For that time is not near, however much we wish it. We must step up our efforts to hasten the inevitable day when the intelligence of viewers is no longer insulted by such shows as that which I have designated "The Devil-tamer of St. Mark's".

THE FREETHINKER

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Telephone: HOP 0029

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY. Every Friday, 8 p.m.: L. EBURY and J. A. MILLAR.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, August 22nd, 6.45 p.m.: A Meeting.

Notes and News

THERE is a disturbing possibility, the *New Scientist* reported (8/7/65), that the bald eagle, official emblem of the United States may become extinct in its homeland. "Not only have the numbers of breeding pairs been dropping steadily for some years, but reports of infertility and nesting failure have multiplied". The Florida Everglades and Alaska are the only places in the US where nesting success is normal, and readers of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (THE FREETHINKER, 18/6/65) will not be surprised to learn that DDT residues from unhatched eggs have provided "strong evidence that organochlorine pesticides are at least partly responsible for the sudden drop in numbers" of the species. Recent comparative surveys have shown that, whereas Vancouver Island eagles fail to produce young in about 20-30 per cent of nests, the figure for the US (excluding Alaska) is about 60 per cent. And the "most obvious difference between the two populations is exposure to pesticides".

★

An analysis by the US Fish and Wildlife Service of 53 bald eagles recently found dead, sick or shot in the USA, outside Alaska, revealed that they all contained DDT residues. And some of the "found dead" birds had larger concentrations of DDT in the liver than the known fatal level for experimental captive bald eagles. The American government is now consulting with ornithologists to prepare "a continent-wide management programme for their national bird". But is the government prepared to tackle the real problem—that of the enormous insecticide industry?

★

It is doubtful", said a *Catholic Herald* editorial (7/8/65) "whether anyone foresaw the volume of bitterness and anger which the decision and even more the manner of its

The Freethinker Sustentation Fund

Previously acknowledged £67 14s. 11d.—G. M. Faulkner, 2s. 6d.; C. Holmes, 10s; C. Morris, 6s; R. J. Hale, 12s. 6d; J. W. Robinson, 10s; J. A. £1; M. Pye, 7s. 6d; L. Brewer, 5s; D. Gloak, 7s. 6d; N. Tosh, 12s. 6d; R. Tungate, £1; W. Mawhinney, 2s. 6d; E.J. Rosie, 2s. 6d; T. W. Archer, 15s; P. Marsden, £1; D. Ferrier, £5 17s. 6d; A. Ungherini, £3 10s; J. McMahon, 2s. 6d; K. G. 1s; J. C. & E. C., £10; C. Cullen, 6s; J. G. Burdon, 9s. 6d; B. A. 1s; C. Cunelli, £1 1s; R. Atherton, 4s; H. Alexander, 10s. 6d; J. F. Gentry, 10s; E. S. Barker, 12s. 6d; H. Haas, £1 14s. 4d; J. Freemont, 10s; D. Starkey, £1; S. Merrifield, 16s; C. Jones, 5s; H. Madoc Jones, 10s; A. W. Coleman, £1 2s. 6d; G. D. Rodger, 2s. 6d; L. H., 1s; I. Gulick, 4s; A. Fenton, 12s. 6d; T. F. Stringer, 5s; R. Brownlee, £1; J. F. W., 1s; Mrs. D. Behr, £1; R. Gilliland, £1; A. E. Smith, 12s. 6d; H. Milne, 10s. 6d; R. C., £10; N. Myrick, £1; T. W. Harris, 5s; I. Barr, 12s. 6d; G. S., 1s; R. C. Mason, £2 1s; D. Taylor, 6s; E. C. R., 6s; J. Tiley, 2s. 6d; W. H. Day, 7s. 6d. In memory of Wm. Ingram, £2; O. A. P., 10s; J. Buchanan, £1 2s. 6d; L. J. Ford, 2s. 6d; M. Rodger, £1; A. T. Browne, £1; A. T. Foster, 11s; T. H. Lee, 5s; T. N. 1s; W. M. £5. Total to date 20th August, 1965, £136 14s. 3d.

announcement, has provoked". The *Herald* was referring to the proposed absorption of Beaumont College at Old Windsor into Stonehurst College in Lancashire, which has brought protests from the parents of Beaumont's 260 boys, as well as a letter to the *Times* from "old boy" Lord Justice Russell. The Society of Jesus, which runs both schools, has been accused of "submitting to the dictates of Rome", behaving in a manner that "smacks of the Inquisition", and of performing a "gigantic confidence trick".

★

THE decision to close Beaumont (which is still being contested) followed an 18 months' investigation by a Canadian Jesuit, Fr. Gordon George. It was approved by the General Congregation of the Society largely foreign, meeting in Rome, and was finally ratified by the recently elected General, Fr. Pedro Arrupe. And many parents and old boys argue that none of these parties could understand "the important place a public school like Beaumont commands in Britain" (*Sunday Times*, 8/8/65). But the order has a perfectly reasonable explanation for the amalgamation. The number of Jesuit teachers in Britain has declined to the point where "we can no longer continue our present commitments without the risk of serious harm to the work and those engaged upon it".

★

THE Loyal Orange Institution of England has no time for ecumenical talk. In a leaflet protesting against the proposed visit of Pope Paul to consecrate the new Liverpool Cathedral, the Liverpool Province explains that it doesn't object to the Pope as a person—"he may be a very good man"—but to his office and blasphemous titles; not against "the Pope in his sin but the Pope in his splendour". And the Province cites the Scriptures (Gal. 1, 8) to "denounce him". More pertinently, the leaflet recalls modern papal action—or inaction—towards Fascism. Pope Pius XII could have excommunicated both Hitler and Mussolini, instead there were concordats; Father Tiso, the Jew-baiter, was promoted to Monsignor. Pius "honoured Marshal Petain and gave to the dictator Franco the highest papal honours". Even John XXIII, "who made strong protests against the persecution of his people behind the Iron Curtain, did nothing to relieve the Protestants of Colombia, although he was regularly informed that hundreds had been martyred . . .".

★

WE SEND our best wishes to the American Rationalist Federation, which will be holding its tenth annual convention on August 27th, 28th and 29th, at the Napstek Bohemian Freethinkers School in Chicago.

A Meditation on the Crucifix

(Continued from page 267)

The power of wrong thought chiefly shapes events on our planet; but opposing and corrective thought-forces maintain our precarious balance towards survival—or have done up till now. The vast malevolence of the former is thus itself a striking proof of the latter's efficiency and power. Now if we, who have freed ourselves from the tyranny of falsehood, could dedicate ourselves to these living thought-forms as totally as our nun to her contemplative prayer, making them the very substance of our life, our reason for living; could we not, working at this truer *opus dei* in the solitary cloisters of our own minds, set up a power-house of mental energy that would infiltrate, gradually transform, and ultimately conquer the mind of humanity?

I think there can be no doubt as to the possibility, particularly if considered from the purely scientific viewpoint of the nature and activity of thought. But there is one great threat, and there are limitations. Time is against us. And the weakness of human nature, even enlightened nature, can fatally limit the production of this vital energy.

To achieve what the mental power-houses of Christianity have achieved with such devastating thoroughness, deforming the shape of world history to their own malevolent pattern, demands the same undiluted output of thought-energy, and more. Not indeed in any sort of fanatic frenzy, or with the de-humanised mind-immolation of our praying nun. But through a quiet, untroubled, yet watchful and perpetual, direction of the whole inner being along the way of freedom: the peaceful yet unrelenting *willing* of it on the whole of mankind; the concept of universal mind-liberty realised, here and now, as the alpha and omega of our own individual existence.

The "contemplatives" amongst us will understand this without difficulty—and there are many more contemplatives in the world than the world has any idea of. In actual fact, any mind that has shuffled off the mortal coil of falsehood and fought its purgative way into freedom has ipso facto entered the ranks of the "Illuminated". The obscurity of what I am trying to say—and saying it very badly, I know—should be no more obscure to them than the "ray of divine darkness" penetrated by the god-worshipper. The obscurity lies in the words that struggle and fail to express, not in the reality.

It can be a serious temptation to any of us to give up the effort in face of the monstrous opposition, almost universal, to the truth of freedom. Still easier to succumb to a world-weary desire to "let it all go" and enjoy (lightheartedly if we can) the riches and pleasures of our personal release from servitude. That "blissful feeling of utter relief" so commonly experienced and expressed by those who have shed the supernatural from their lives and turned their backs on savage gods for ever, can prolong itself unduly in a self-bound, unprofitable dream of Arcady.

But dare we yield to either temptation?

Today, as tensions tighten in so many troubled places of the earth; while every hour men are killed or maimed in some mortal struggle somewhere on the globe, and women and little children share the horror and are shown no mercy; as our fear grows that these scattered fires may meet and flare out in the final conflagration that will engulf us all, and our planet with us, in the most hideous form of self-annihilation; face to face with apocalyptic warfare on our freedom even to exist, can we bear—or afford—

to play the role of the collaborator, or sink into the feather-bed of dreamland?

"There can be but little liberty on earth", said Robert Green Ingersoll, "while men worship a tyrant in heaven".

If men continue to adore these monsters, who are nothing but projections of their own evil passions and pernicious thought-forms, and to obey their "commands", which are willed upon men by authoritarian exploiters of human stupidity, not only will there be little liberty, there will be none at all, for no one will be left alive to enjoy it. (To a hypothetical handful of survivors in a radioactive gehenna, the sole prospect of "liberty" would be a quick death). If therefore we refuse or neglect to do what we can towards the dethronement of idols, we condemn to the frightful results of their tyranny not only their misguided worshippers but ourselves. The serfs of all the earth's hoax-forms of guilt-fear-gloom-and-blood, and the sons of freedom, will perish together in the holocaust.

Looking for the last time on our little nun, through whom, it would seem, we have learnt many things, I am startled to see the white veil glimmer into grey shadow, the dark habit shrink into nothingness, the face go out like a lamp extinguished. Nothing is left but the hands, and the stark, crude outline of the Thing they hold.

As I watch in awed horror the hands change. They change again and again, an endless concatenation of subtle transformations; but their grip is constant on the hard bone of what they hold, and this never changes.

I recognise these hands as their plasma forms and re-forms, curving round the cross in their individual moulds, betraying the secret of their ownership. I distinguish the jewelled hands of popes and prelates, the amethyst of bishops, the thin gold bands of the consecrated; the rough knuckles of peasants, the hard fists of soldiers; the racked bones of the tortured; the trembling clutch of the condemned, the grip of the despairing, the weak clasp of the dying. And gradually, though its form never changes, the substance of What is held is transmuted: from an idol it becomes a weapon. And now the hands that come to it have it in a vice-grip, hard, coarse, cruel, merciless ringed or ringless, hands deformed to the talons of vultures, the claws of wild beasts, the wily paws of great cats that torture their prey before the kill.

Until from the last dreadful fingers, which have lost all semblance to humanity, materialises—not the shape of a vampire or hyena—but the form of a man. I recognise the Franciscan habit, then the curiously veiled eyes and fanatical face above it; and as I stare the habit changes to a military uniform; the face changes also, horribly, but it is still Brother Filipovitch, only now in charge of a concentration camp somewhere in the hell-on-earth of a tortured, desecrated Europe.

And now I see that he has two weapons: the crucifix held high in his left hand, and strapped to his right shoulder the *mauser*—the throat-cutting knife shaped like a crescent and sharpened to the last razor-edge of efficiency.

Thus doubly armed—and which is the more terrible weapon of the two?—he sallies forth with a group of fellow-murderers on a throat-cutting competition among his wretched prisoners, the victims being chosen at random and the honours awarded for the neatest, most dexterous severance of the jugular vein.

The hideous scenes of carnage fade, the last screams of

mortal terror, the groans of that atrocious agony, die away. Brother F melts away also, no doubt to that limbo of safety and comfort which engulfed so many of the same ilk who slipped mysteriously, through inexplicable holes in the net of international justice . . .

I am back again in the cloistral silence. The last rays of evening sunlight bathe the walled patio, red-gilding the fretted stonework of gracious windows. They linger on another human form, so very different, yet likewise in uniform, for she belongs to one of the multitudinous regiments of the Church Militia. She is armed with the Franciscan's left-hand weapon, which, if it lacks the deadly sharpness of the *mauser*, has far more sinister business to accomplish than the mere slitting of human throats like slaughtered pigs.

I watch her as she lifts it to her lips. They imprint, with reverent passion, a kiss on each wound of the Crucified.

And it seems to me, in the dark flush of the dying sun, that her lips bleed, that her pale face, her white veil, and her whole person are bathed in blood . . . not from the "wounds" of the "Son of God", but from the mad butchery of insane self-martyrdom needlessly endured by the sons of Man.

(Concluded)

The Scientific Method

WHAT hopes and fears does the scientific method imply for mankind? I do not think that this is the right way to put the question. Whatever this tool in the hand of man will produce depends entirely on the nature of the goals alive in this mankind. Once these goals exist, the scientific method furnishes means to realise them. Yet it cannot furnish the very goals. The scientific method itself would not have led anywhere, it would not even have been born without a passionate striving for clear understanding.

Perfections of means and confusion of goals seems—in my opinion—to characterise our age. If we desire sincerely and passionately the safety, the welfare and the free development of the talents of all men, we shall not be in want of the means to approach such a state. Even if only a small part of mankind strives for such goals, their superiority will prove itself in the long run.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN.

[The above was the conclusion of a recording made by Einstein for a Science Conference in London on September 28th, 1941. It was included in Out of My Later Years, published by the Philosophical Library, USA]

The True Ecumenism

THE Dutch government has paid F1. 100,000 (£10,000) into the Defence and Aid Fund for the victims of South-African racial legislation. This led immediately to a spontaneous unity between all the "Christian"—i.e. the Catholic and the diverse Protestant—parties.

Without exception and in perfect harmony, this united front, extending from the Catholic clericals to their antipodes of the fervent anti-papist minuscule Protestant groups expressed its disapprobation of the governmental act. The Defence and Aid Fund (recommended by the UN) was alleged to be a Communist and subversive organisation. A Protestant MP as all his political friends, a hater of "dirty" materialism, feared that the gift might endanger our economic relations with South Africa.

Suddenly and for a moment the reactionary nature of Christian politics peeped out of the usual democratic phraseology.

A. M. VAN DER GIEZEN.

Shakespeare and Freethinking

MODERN RESEARCH scholars tell us that Shakespeare was the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer of his time, employing an army of ghost writers. These ghosts, in their turn, were not above making use of anything that was available—slipping in, say, existing poems which would correspond today to popular verses on a popular calendar. Indeed, the erudite have been able to demonstrate that there is hardly an original word in some of the plays. Yet all of this does not discountenance the fact that Shakespeare acted as a creative editor of the material. It is, therefore, perfectly legitimate for David Tribe to prove textually that The Bard was both a freethinker and a humanist.

He points out, with a most happy sense of mischief, that it would not be in the interests of those who gloss grammar school texts to reveal our national poet as both a sceptic and a queer. Then, in his *Freethought And Humanism In Shakespeare* (Pioneer Press, 2s.), Mr. Tribe demolishes the pretensions of the "respectable establishment" one by one.

The Catholics, for instance, try to claim Shakespeare; but Mr. Tribe argues convincingly that "Shakespeare's reaction against Puritanism was a tribute not to Catholicism but to Humanism." In the plays, the angels and demons, so dear to the miracle and morality plays, are replaced with spirits and classical gods and goddesses. "In Shakespeare's world there is no place for either original sin or divine grace"; and amid an amplitude of supporting reasons, Mr. Tribe mentions how many of the great characters commit suicide. Again The Swan of Avon never recommended the Bible as inspirational reading, and when it came to the "after-life" he took the brave stand that "The rest is silence". If he used the word "God" he employed it "as a word full of sound and fury, signifying nothing save to the character who spoke"; and if he introduced "sin" and "heaven" into the sonnets, it was surely because "antisocial behaviour" or "psychological region" are hard to fit into imabic pentameters.

Mr. Tribe's contribution is a closely reasoned and brilliant paper, and everyone should study it to see why Swinburne declared: "Shakespeare was in the genuine sense—that is, in the best and highest meaning of the word—a Freethinker." The paper was originally read in the Alliance Hall, London, on the evening of May 19th, 1964, when the National Secular Society celebrated the quater-centenary of the birth of William Shakespeare; and the author pays a tribute to this occasion when Richard Ainley and Joan Miller and other famous and gifted performers read the poetry. Now, with the booklet, there is the consolation of a most attractive production, the cover reproducing the portrait by Martin Droeshout and quoting from Harold Pinter.

One hopes that in the same way that David Tribe has viewed "Shakespeare" through the texts, other freethinking scholars may be moved to view Shakespeare through the family. So much can be learnt, for example, from The Bard's change of attitude towards his "heroines" when his brother became too old to play the roles. This is a task which should not be left to "religious commentators", but one which should be tackled by someone who will interpret history and not read "an interpolation" into the facts.

OSWELL BLAKESTON

Details of membership of the National Secular Society and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Telephone: HOP 2717.

CORRESPONDENCE

NEW MORALITY OR NONE AT ALL

Mrs. Ebury's analysis of Christian morality is not only indisputable — it never was in dispute!

I maintain that to start a family before completing the training which should enable one to support it is bad sense.

The remedy is effective birth control.

The Roman Catholic complainants to the Frank's Commission think the remedy is Christian morality. Indignant at this idea, I wrote an article in an attempt to refute them. Mrs. Ebury, by further underlining the nihilistic and masochistic nature of traditional Christian sex morality, strongly reinforces my original arguments.

For this, I thank her.

GILLIAN HAWTIN.

[This correspondence is now closed—ED.]

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS

I notice (*The Guardian*, 6/8/65) that the Minister of Education has replied to a parliamentary question by saying that he will only interfere concerning the present position of RI in schools if there is consensus of opinion with regard to the desirable changes. Such an answer is curious and permits of little hope for the Free-thinker at the moment. Despite much verbal parade of meetings between Christian and Humanist educationalists, it is less than likely that any consensus of opinion will be reached which will satisfy the Secularist. In fact, there is very real danger that a so-called consensus might be reached which could have the sole effect of paring away some of the difficulties which Christians find within the practical outcomes of the 1944 Education Act. At the same time, it is nonsense to pretend that the present situation has been reached by any past consensus of opinion. It was reached in fact by Cardinal Hinsley and Archbishop Temple cashing in on the wartime situation, assisted by various "Free Churchmen" who hoped that, by putting their historic principles concerning religion and the secular state into pawn, they might gain something for themselves.

There is a lesson in this parliamentary reply for Freethinkers generally. They must continue with an all-out and long-term campaign for secular education whatever *soi-disant* Christian educationalists may say. In the end, a consensus of opinion may not be reached, but it might well be that a volume of radical protest could be roused which would sweep away RI, religious assemblies and other state educational panderings to the Churches for good and all. In the meanwhile, it is up to parents and teachers of rationalistic views to take the fullest advantage of the "contracting-out" machinery as it exists at the present time. Various chores and burdens attend the inculcation of religion in the schools, such as the policing of assembly. The rationalistic teacher should contract out and leave such work to those who support RI in the schools. As they believe that they have the help of the Holy Spirit in their task, they cannot complain that they are put at a disadvantage.

F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIORITIES

In a recent letter in THE FREETHINKER Glenn P. Turner of Wisconsin shows that he shares a common misunderstanding of the importance of having a loyalty which takes precedence over other loyalties. As I see it a person has to preserve an attitude to life which has regard to several levels of interest. Working from the centre outwards, personal survival comes first, then family matters, then city matters, then state matters, then continental matters and finally world affairs.

If we now consider the relations between these various levels of interest, we will see that the higher levels must take precedence over the lower levels. For example the family man is obliged to forswear selfishness in the absolute sense if the family is to become a friendly group—and of course this also applies to all other members of the family if it is to live harmoniously. The same principle applies to other levels "above" the family according to the scale I have suggested. For example, city councillors cannot expect to gain special privileges for themselves or their families without the question of justice to all families being raised by other family men in the city. Thus, at this level city loyalties have to take precedence over family loyalties. Similarly national politicians cannot be allowed to put the interests of their own city above the interests of other cities: national loyalties must take precedence over city loyalties if the nation is to work as a friendly or co-operative group.

The point I was trying to make in my letter "The Way Forward" was to indicate that the civic consciousness of most human beings breaks down at this point and that common sense and logic requires the human beings of our time to understand this situation

and do something about it.

In other words I am not to be understood as advocating that, as Mr. Turner puts it, we must "fight nationalism and love of one's country". It is a question of establishing a new *chief* loyalty to extricate mankind from the national interests. A "my country right or wrong" attitude of mind is prevalent all over the world, and Dr. Arnold Toynbee, the eminent historian, has rightly pointed to nationalism of this kind as being the greatest existing danger to human survival. In a recent letter to me he wrote, "I agree, as you realise, that we must have a world society . . . and have it on a basis of a loyalty of individuals to the world community that will be paramount over their loyalty to their local states". I don't think the issue I am concerned with can be put any more clearly or succinctly than that.

I would now like to turn to another sentence in Mr. Glenn Turner's letter which indicates some misunderstanding. He writes, "I hope some day to be able to say that I am a citizen of UN and loyal to all humanity". But if he reads the constitution of the UN he will find that there can be no question of any person ever becoming a UN citizen. The only members are, by the constitution of that organisation, sovereign states. Thus the UN is designed to perpetuate international anarchy rather than to provide a supra-national focus for the loyalty of all human beings. This is why the present constitution must be scrapped as a proper basis for world peace and means found for merging nations under supra-national government.

If the members of the European Common Market were to succeed in setting up a European Parliament to which all matters relating to issues between the states concerned could be referred for supra-national decision we would have moved effectively nearer to the ideal of a world-wide supra-national set-up.

As regards Mr. Turner's own attitude, it is significant to my mind that he says "I hope some day to be able to say that . . . I am loyal to all humanity". I think we should all be saying that we are *now* in this position. In other words I think the personal decision must precede effective working for the end condition posited by the statement from Dr. Toynbee. When a majority of the persons in the world make a clear decision for giving their top loyalty to mankind we will have taken the first necessary step on the way forward to world peace.

E. G. MACFARLANE.

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NO SOCIETY has ever been, or is, without behaviour norms, or *mores*, ideas of what is permitted or forbidden, ethical, moral, right or wrong. Religious systems, of which the Christian is possibly the most complex, and certainly the best known to us, claim authoritarian sanctions. Other systems are man-centred, and utilitarian. Only comparatively recently have researchers, schooled in anthropology and psychology, studied them objectively, and traced all to economic and other diverse social causes.

The Roman Catholic Church has claimed to be the unique, original and only form of Christianity. It is a truism that its critics turned this against itself by accusing it of obtaining within its amorphous nature the most vestiges of primitive absurdities. To regard it as a system of ethics is largely to read into it a later rationalism and modern enlightenment. Its central dogma concerns a Man-God who is consumed to enable mortals to make themselves God-Man. The fears of prehistoric man are projected into superstitions. It is rational to fear fire, but not to evolve an eternal hell. One may not move the saints by prayer, but one is moved by contemplation of the saints to prayer. Dying, He gave Himself for us, and by dying, mortification in the midst of life, we resolve ourselves back into Him. It is the ultimate in fetishism.

Priest or Policeman?

But few aim at complete immolation. For the everyday Christian the matter is reduced to going without salt in one's porridge when one has an exam to pass, or giving up the cinema in Lent when mother is ill. This amount of self-sacrifice does not impede natural vigorous human growth, the well-springs of physical and mental development. The ordinary Catholic family today, going to confession on Saturday evening, mass Sunday morning, and a sodality mid-week, adverts not in the least to the fact that its material surroundings are due to progress in the sciences made *in spite of* Christian traditionalism. But these ecclesiastical institutions exist, people born into them see their parents revere them from their earliest years, accept them as part of their needs and background. Since most people have a sense of what is right and decent, what is best eschewed, what is all right, what is caddish, in most likelihood they would lead lives precisely the same as if they were not sincere, yet in a sense, nominal adherents, of Christian Churches. It is a moot point whether the priest or the policeman keeps them in order in the last analysis. In short, I am claiming that most English Christian churchgoers' lives are moulded by an environment which, both in its idealistic and its materialistic origins is not only non-Christian, but to an increasing degree, anti-Christian. If the reader protests there is little new in this, I agree, but I want to reiterate it for what follows.

For the vast number of churchgoers, even the "births, deaths and marriages" type, do not realise or advert to this. They project their feelings of decency, fair-play and ordinary common honesty on to their superstitious Christian mystery religion. The religion of mystery cults, magi,

miracles, is domesticated, through the processes of upbringing in home and school, to stand for all their ordinary, everyday needs. A universal religion, upwelling from the savageries of the remote past, does not equate too well with the complexities of contemporary technological society. But one must get on with life; there isn't time to work out all the discrepancies. In the lives of the more thoughtful, though, there almost certainly will occur a time

when the particularities of their religion are examined more minutely. I think then, that one of several things may occur.

The person takes the maxims of Christianity literally. He sells all he has, eschews his relatives, suppresses the desires of his

will, his mind, flesh and senses. This form of "life", being virtually incompatible with competitive careerism and civilised society, drains off its victim into a religious order.

Inconsistencies

Alternatively, the Christian may intensify some form of religious activity, but achieve a personal synthesis with his mode of life "in the world". These are usually very active types of people. Unless some very hard knock comes their way, their practicality tends to restrict them from seeing inconsistencies in their professions.

Now, if the first type of person, above has a strong emotive nature, physical strength, and a not particularly original caste of mind, they may last till the end. On the other hand, some may get an insight into the nature of their religion which they never had before, realise that if carried out to the letter, Christianity is not *possible*, and find their way to a secularism which realises the most practical religion to be self-help.

Religion and Sex

Now the Freethinker may clearly, and very truly, see that, essentially, Christian religion is inimical to sex. A Freethinker would doubtless argue much religious energy is sex-derived and sex-fed; sex accounts for ecstasies, flagellation, the more extreme forms of asceticism, and much sickly devotionism. Indeed, the major dogmas can be explained in terms of sex fantasies. To this, the Christian apologist replies that they are not manichees, that sex is God-given and must be given back to Him too, and attempts to draw a line between sanctified sex and morbidity.

Two things may be remembered. First, most ordinary everyday Christians of the type I have already attempted to describe—i.e. those that do not very closely associate logical objective belief with their way of life, in the sense, not of being hypocrites, but of missing implications—have a quite normal and healthy everyday attitude to sex. Secondly, there exists a second contradictory, saner tradition. The organised Churches have realised that the generations only continue through this means. Motherhood is honoured. A great deal of attention is given to family life. The centre of Christmas is a baby.

It is precisely because of the stress on the cohesion of family life, that the very concept of illegitimacy, recently

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Business of Morality

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

referred to in our correspondence columns, can have relevance only in relation to the traditional Christian view of legitimacy. Secularists and Freethinkers, standing outside this Christian view, rejecting sacramental marriage, believe marriage ideally subsists only as long as love, and believe the birth of children—whether one opts for quins with the aid of a fertility drug, or none at all—should be voluntary and regulated. For a family of nine to have a tenth child, in certain circumstances may be more immoral than for two young unmarried people to beget out of love. A person who does not recognise wedlock, cannot be shocked by children being born out of it! A love-child born out of wedlock is intrinsically more desirable than an unwanted child born within it. It is desirable that with time such should find social acceptance. It has been said that (it is counted as an expression of Christian liberalism) there are no illegitimate children, only illegitimate parents. I myself would like to quarrel with the statement that there are any illegitimate parents either—with one possible exception.

Common-Sense Morality

For to have children before the tree is ripe, seems to me a tragedy. Surely one is better able to cope, emotionally, mentally, materially, and provide those things all parents desire for their children, if one has first had as long a training as one's capacities merit, without the distractions and responsibilities of child-rearing? Still, even here, readers of recent correspondence in the *Times Educational Supplement* must appreciate that marriage for students will, of course, be an individual choice. But, even rejecting all supernaturalism, all preconceived, ecclesiastically-imposed notions, there may be strong prudential reasons for delaying having children, though not necessarily abstaining from sex. Reasons of study, or of finance, would seem to be among those to the forefront. This does not mean that sex *need* be delayed, though sometimes one rather wonders if the modern world has not gone too far in the other direction of making sex *compulsory*! There is healthy abstinence, and the promiscuity of *Brave New World*. If however, sex be not delayed, and procreation must, the obvious sheer basic necessity is an efficient contraceptive. This is a matter of medicine, of physiology. It is common sense. In the social context it is morality! At least it is *my* morality—a humane, utilitarian, common-sense morality.

For this reason I denounced in a previous article, the attempts of a small reactionary Roman Catholic group in Oxford to tell the Frank's commission that having babies out of wedlock was due to the shocking declension from Christian standards. Not to have an unwanted child either in or out of marriage, is common sense. But this common sense, to be carefully distinguished from Christian morality, is too often claimed as such.

Everyone's Heritage

Full, real, complete Christian sex morality is, as I have attempted to outline, at best dubious, at worst pernicious. But it ought to be borne in mind that the vast majority of ordinary Christians in present-day England hold only a very attenuated form of Christianity. In many cases it has shed almost every connection with its original, ascetic, mystery-religion origin. What people are really clinging on to is common sense which they confuse with the full-blooded Christianity that not one person in a million bothers with. If everyone who calls himself a Christian were to accept this, hook, line and sinker, the world would come to a standstill. Meanwhile, Christians are claiming that common-sense which is everyone's heritage as the monopoly of Christian ethics. We must expose their trick for what it is, and this can only be achieved by clear thinking, plain speaking and militant action.

Atheists Banners Forward Go

By DAN O'NEILL

ON THE day, so confidently, even jubilantly awaited by his fiercer Fundamentalist opponents, when the thunderbolt smacks down like an apocalyptic shot across his bows, George A. Woodcock, Britain's oldest atheist missionary, might start believing. If not, he has been frequently warned, a second will sizzle down after and Mr. Woodcock, his "atheist propaganda", and his banners shouting that "Atheism is the Truth" will be dispatched like some pantomime demon with only a hint of smoke and the smell of charred cardboard to mark his passing.

But knowing Manchester's weather as well as only a man who spends most of his life on street corners in the city can know it, Mr. Woodcock feels that even a couple of high-grade thunderbolts could have a perfectly natural explanation. It would take, he thinks, at least a large reproving finger wagging down at him from the clouds to get him back into a church shouting his "Hallelujahs" with the rest of the saved, shouting them as lustily as he did 60 years ago in the Young Man's Bible Class at Salford. Until this happens, he says, he will continue to propagate his irreligion as fervently as the deacons of that Bible Class dispensed their comforting beliefs.

"Every Sunday I used to go", he recalls. "Believed in it all. Jonah, The Whale. Everything. I was brought up to it". But that, he adds, was before he discovered Darwin and Huxley and his special apostle of disbelief, Robert Ingersoll. "I never went back to church after reading what they had to say. They made so much sense, you see".

It was wise for an atheist needing a job in 1905 to be discreet in his beliefs: Mr. Woodcock stayed at his work as a clerk in an insurance office because he refrained from trumpeting his message. "They wouldn't have liked me to make it too obvious", he explains. But he retired in 1947 and in that year, cardboard banners flapping, he started his crusade. Now although he is 80 "and starting to wither", he leaves his Oldham home four times a week to deliver the word.

He is accepted by the barrow boys and beggars who share his pitches: perhaps they have more customers, but Mr. Woodcock claims his share of converts. There are regulars, too, he says proudly, who collect their flesh-sustaining injections of atheism from him each week. They appear, like the diminutive man in an open-necked shirt revealing an impressively tangled amount of chest hair, to buy their copy of *THE FREETHINKER*, and melt away until next week. Sometimes they will return for more detailed explanations from their mentor.

Mr. Woodcock is a member of the National Secular Society and, says the Society's secretary, is one of the "two dozen" missionaries among the several thousand members. Mr. Woodcock, however, claims that he is unique. He is the only one who proselytises on what might be called a full-time basis. He is also the only one with banners, which he wears, in hat and waistcoat, wherever he goes.

The trouble with the placards, though, he says sadly, is that they attract what he calls the wilder element. "Oh, I've had hooligans steal my hat many times. They kick it down the street". He pauses reflectively: "They'd leave me alone if the signs said that Jesus loved me. You see, they think they can get away with it if the mock an atheist. Public opinion being what it is". Still, Mr. Woodcock admits that things are better now than they once were.

(Concluded on page 276)

On the Threshold

By GEORGE R. GOODMAN

A HOUSEWIFE'S sphere of influence begins on her side of the front doorstep and often differs greatly from that of her partner in marriage. For, despite living in this space-age, she is still the primitive female of ancient times, prone and susceptible to traditional taboos and tribal usages, first implanted at her mother's knees and then duly fanned during her impressionable school-years and teenage by silly playmates and the idle gossip of her mother's overcredulous acquaintances.

If a strictly orthodox housewife were asked why she was buying fish on Fridays, she would, in all probability, say that it is in memory of the Lord's Supper and the "miraculous draught of fishes", and that she had always been taught to abstain from eating meat on that day. What she does not know is that the so-called "Lord" is a completely imaginary figure, invented by the Church-fathers during the third century to bolster up the most absurd creeds that religiously-crazed minds ever concocted! In those early centuries, it was the ambition of every Patriarch to make up a set of creeds according to his own ideas and then to influence as many bishops as he could in order to have as many followers as possible.

Then there would be innumerable plots to prevail upon the governors of provinces, palace officials, emperors and their wives, to lend their soldiery in support of this or that bishop and his particular creed. It was an unending struggle between rival factions and, merely to read the history of the early Church with its constant persecutions and consequent butcheries, is enough to turn anybody away from orthodox religion and its madness.

Why do fishes have such a close connection with what is now called Christianity? Because it was a fish-cult, just as the preceding era was a lamb-cult, both derived from the reigning zodiacal signs Pisces and Aries. The central-figure was called by the contemporary Greeks Ichthys (big fish) and his followers minnows. Strange to say, they never dubbed themselves *pisciculi*, which is Latin for "little fishes".

Apart from the fact that the New Testament is full of the fish-typology, the followers of the sect had the fish emblem on their doorposts, their priests had a headdress in the shape of a fish mouth (later called a mitre), fishes were printed on their burial-urns (not crosses), their Jesus-figure was credited with multiplying fish by the basket-full, and bread too—all because he was "born" in Virgo (the stellar sign of bread—the star Spica meant a spike of wheat) and he functioned as the Avatar of the Pisces era. The word Avatar means "the descended deity in visible form", according to a dictionary explanation. No wonder then that (apart from bread) fish became a kind of a ritualistic meal on a certain day.

But why was the Friday chosen? According to the spinners of religious yarns, Friday was supposed to be the day when the "Christian Avatar" sacrificed himself for the "salvation" of the world—which was quite a consignment. The real explanation is not so fantastic as the ecclesiastical one. According to Hebrew and oriental custom, the Sabbath and all the festivals too, began at sundown of the previous day. Every Sabbath therefore starts at sundown on Friday evening. If one were to pay a surprise visit to an orthodox Jewish family, one would see on the table two specially baked loaves, elliptical in shape, covered with a richly embroidered velvet cloth, and flanked by two lighted candles.

The loaves, presumably allegorical of two torsos, are covered with poppy-seeds, symbolising fertility! Grace is said, and all participants, children too, receive from the head of the family a piece of the crisply baked loaf and sip a few drops of wine from a communal glass. The meal that follows (depending on the district) consists of stuffed fish, prepared with spices and served cold, or fried or boiled fish. Anyhow, no matter what denomination (or none), fish is still on the menu on Fridays, as a relic from the Piscean age!

Christian ecclesiasticism turned the homely little ceremony of eating a small piece of bread and sipping a few drops of wine into a fatuous "eucharist", an impressive word which lends itself so well to mystical hocus-pocus! Actually, it is Greek and merely means to give thanks or to say grace. But tell that to a celebrant . . .

When Leonardo da Vinci painted his famous tempera on the wall of a convent refectory at Milan (1498), he called it the holy supper (*la santa cena*), but the English deceivers went one better and called it the "last" supper, implying that next day the central figure would be crucified. In point of fact no crucifixion ever took place!

Only in one other language is that meal called the "last" supper. The Spaniards call it *ultima cena* but the French call it *la sainte cène*, the Germans *Heilige Abendmahl*, and the Dutch and Flemings *het heilige avondmaal*. All of these mean "the holy supper", except for the Spanish which copies the English.

Another peculiar tradition prevails amongst many people and denominations. A husband is by his clergy "enjoined" to sleep with his wife on Friday evenings. Here, again, we have a faint echo from ancient times, when ritualistic love-feasts were part and parcel of the people's life.

According to Church history, Agapae or love-feasts were closely associated with the eucharist, particularly amongst the early Christians. Apparently, these primitive devotees abused their licence to such an extent that the Church had to step in and separate the love-feasts from the eucharist! Later on, the love-making was suppressed altogether, but persisted until the eighth century. Even today, the carnival which precedes Lent, is famed for its libertinism, particularly on the Continent.

When the Bible was translated, the word *agapae* (meaning love) had become a "dirty" word, with the lamentable result that Paul's panegyric in praise of pure love—about the best chapter (1 Cor. 13) in all his letters—was utterly spoiled through the maudlin prudery of the timid translators who, throughout, substituted the anaemic word "charity" for the greatest of all, love!

Why does the bridegroom carry his bride over the doorstep as he enters his new home with her? Because, without being conscious of it, he is still the primitive aboriginal of 10,000 years ago, full of racial and tribal superstitions, imitating and accepting them, without in any way enquiring into their origin.

The ancient superstition was that it was unlucky to tread on to the doorstep. Why? Because the doorstep had already been invested with a high degree of magical powers by slaughtering an animal and, accompanied by the proper incantations, sprinkling its blood over the threshold and thus imparting to it the potent power to keep all evil spirits away!

(Continued on page 279)

This Believing World

WE ARE SORRY to state that the once holy relics, associated with a great church, appear no longer to be popular. For instance, the Friends of St. Paul's have arranged their annual exhibition of the cathedral's treasures, but, according to the *London Evening Standard* (2/8/65), "most of the relics of this mighty church are, surprisingly, of recent times", and therefore, not surprisingly, no piece of the true cross is shown, no "stones from the Holy Sepulchre", "strands of Mary Magdalene's hair", nor even "drops of St. Paul's blood". But you can see, "the tall black wooden carved candlesticks", which "kept the vigil at both the Duke of Wellington's and Sir Winston Churchill's funerals".

★

THE truth is that most people these days—with the exception of Roman Catholics—treat the "holy relics" of the past with a loud guffaw. Even that solemn child of the Reformation the murderer of Servetus, John Calvin himself, provides for us in his *Treatise on Relics* one of the few religious works packed with astringent humour, enough to kill almost every religious relic ever preserved. We just laugh them out of court in our unbelieving ways.

★

IT COST nearly £30 to go to Lourdes through Europica Travel Ltd., which had been approved by the Roman Church, and recommended by its priests. Alas, the firm has gone into liquidation, and no money can be or will be returned, not even any insurance money. And the poor pilgrims are now holding the penniless baby, with no redress whatever. We cannot help wondering how such a thing could possibly happen with the firm under the special protection of the Virgin Mary herself. One can indeed understand a vulgar travel agency swindling the public, but a protégé of the Church—and of Lourdes! Has not the Church got troubles enough?

★

NO TRUE Christian can doubt that the most popular miracle Jesus ever performed was changing water into wine, especially for boozers who had "well drunk", as John so finely put it! Fortunately, some modern vicars defend wine-bibbing for, as the Rev. D. Strudwick, vicar of St. Clements, East Dulwich, claims (*South London Press*, 20/7/65), "Wine is an essential part of the greatest sacraments", and every pub-crawler would agree with him. Abstainers, of course, stress that the wine made by Jesus was "non-alcoholic", as if anybody could get "well drunk" on that stuff!

★

SO, according to its vicar, the Rev. T. Thompson, St. Paul's Peckham, is in danger of becoming known as the "women's Church". And why? "Because the fathers in the parish seem to shun it". Well, if the fathers don't go, it looks as though they are *actually* shunning the church, not merely seeming to. The truth is, Mr. Thompson says, that they "regard religion as the woman's concern", and do not like "being known as churchgoers". In fact, "where religion is concerned" men can't be bothered, and "it costs a lot for a man to be known as a Christian at work". Mr. Thompson is to be congratulated on his plain-speaking, though, as far as we can see he has no remedy. He can only deplore the fact that for some men at least, "our blessed Lord" makes no appeal.

WITHOUT COMMENT

I once asked for a Knox translation of the New Testament at a "Bible" shop in Brighton and was told: "We sell only Christian literature here".

—Letter in *Daily Telegraph* (12/8/65)

ATHEIST BANNERS FORWARD GO

(Concluded from page 274)

People, he believes, are getting more tolerant and "the hooligans" tend to ignore him today.

There are other, less violent, opponents: they appear, says Mr. Woodcock, as determined to convert him as he is to convert them. "Ministers mainly. They'll argue with me. But some of them walk off in a huff. But some of them buy the paper and sometimes I think it would even be worth going to church to hear what they have to say after reading it".

The ministers and the Christian matrons who predict those sudden thunderbolts rarely make Mr. Woodcock lose his temper. "They've got their beliefs, I've got mine". It's the "sly ones" who infuriate him. These are the people who walk nonchalantly past him, turning zealously at the last minute to thrust their own brands of religious merchandise into his unwilling hands. "They're trying to convert me", he says with some astonishment. "After 60 years they're trying to change my mind".

"Where Are the Dead?" asks one determinedly sectarian tract Mr. Woodcock produces as evidence of his opponents' perfidy. It was thrust into his pocket by a furtive man who disappeared so abruptly that it seemed likely that he had heard rumours of the impending thunderbolt and expected it at any time. The tract provided Mr. Woodcock with some slight amusement. "You see? Even when they're preaching Christianity they can't help attacking other denominations".

There is a lot more tolerance, he believes, in THE FREETHINKER. He sells 70 copies a week and chuckles over articles on Catholics and contraception or the sharper essays on the profits in evangelism today. "It's a good paper", he says. "It was started in 1881 and has been going ever since". Several thousand copies of the paper are sold in 15 different countries, and the society says that it is the only one of its type in the language.

Mr. Woodcock also sells copies of what he calls "the book", the story in minute, eye straining print, of the Bible. He sells it in his fervour for 1s. 6d., a markdown of a shilling. "It destroys the myths", he explains. "It's pure reason". It is also, he hints, something of a literary H-bomb capable of destroying the most inflexible belief "in all the nonsense".

There is no material profit—nor, indeed, any comforting thought of future rewards—for the atheist missionary. Mr. Woodcock sends the money he receives for his books and newspapers to the headquarters of the National Secular Society. His only reward, he says, is the knowledge that he is preaching the truth. He lives with his wife on his old age pension and a retirement pension.

He will continue to march the streets of Manchester until the day he dies, he says. There are more converts to be made. Fortunately he has never had children and so has never been faced with the problems that might have arisen when the conflict between principle and domestic peace for the children's sake arrived.

Peace, it seems might have won: Mr. Woodcock's wife is a Unitarian and is one of the few people he has never tried to convert. He leaves his arguments, his hat, and his banners outside the living-room door. At 80 a man needs a relaxed home life, he explains, a little defensively.

(Reprinted from *The Guardian*)

MORALS WITHOUT RELIGION

and other essays

By MARGARET KNIGHT

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

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OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD. (Tower Hill), Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Car Park, Victoria Street), Sunday Evenings.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY. Every Friday, 8 p.m.: L. EBURY and J. A. MILLAR.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

Notes and News

WE ONLY met Willie Gallacher once when we spoke together on an anti-Christian motion at the London School of Economics a few years ago. Although over seventy, he delivered one of the liveliest speeches we have heard, and it was certainly no fault of his that the motion was lost. He proved a genial companion during dinner, and expressed his appreciation of THE FREETHINKER, which he read. He also wrote an occasional letter to us. In his earlier parliamentary days, of course, he could draw audiences of hundreds, and hold their attention by his sincerity and fervour. He was an emotional rather than an intellectual Communist, but he had the courage of his convictions. One could dispute his reasoning, but not his reasons.

★

GRANADA Television made a good job of Samuel Butler's *The Way of all Flesh*, adapted by Giles Cooper as the play of the week on August 16th. Despite the necessary compression into 85 minutes (we saw nothing of John and George Pontifex but began with Ernest's father Theobald, who was compelled to take orders against his will) it vividly recreated the sanctimonious Victorian hell that Butler so devastatingly exposed. Brian Wilde gave a fine performance as Theobald and the death of his wife (so concerned about respectability in heaven) was the outstanding scene in the play. Among the quotable remarks we noted Alethea's "It seems almost blasphemous to die after being prayed for by Dr. Skinner", and young Ernest's exclamation, "Well I don't see why Providence should mind Ellen having a baby" (Ellen, his future wife, was at that time the maid, and the baby was illegitimate). But it is Edward who best sums up Butler's attitude to religion: "So much for the power of prayer!"

THERE is little doubt, according to Brian Wicker, that "one of the problems that will exercise Catholics in the coming years is the celibacy of the clergy" (*The Guardian*, 12/8/65). The thin end of the wedge has already been driven into the traditional position, Mr. Wicker pointed out, by the reintroduction of a married diaconate and the ordination of a few married pastor-converts on the Continent. But he thought the contraception debate "likely in the long run to affect the issue more deeply than either of these moves". Recent writings on the sex question by Catholics had brought out into the open "the inappropriateness of celibate clergymen seeming to lay down the law to a married laity on matters of intimate sexual behaviour". We like that "seeming".

★

MR. WICKER was not suggesting, however that "clerical celibacy is always personally inhibiting or that it has not served the Church well in the past". He probably hasn't read H. C. Lea's *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church*, and as a Roman Catholic he obviously had to put up some defence of the celibate state. He regarded it, nevertheless, as "marginal, not to say irrelevant to the priestly vocation as such".

★

FEW Freethinkers, we imagine, would disagree with the sentiments expressed by a woman in a letter to *Komsomolskaya Pravda* cited in the *Guardian* (16/8/65). There should be, the writer, G. Kelt, said, an end to "sledgehammer" tactics in the campaign to stamp out religion in Russia, and more use should be made of reason to propagate atheism. It was not sufficient to vilify priests by calling them "obscurantist" or "brakes on progress". Many priests were first-rate scientists, she added, as the example of the Polish astronomer and priest Copernicus proved. Here she falls into a common error, one she shares, for instance, with F. Sherwood Taylor in *Galileo and the Freedom of Thought*. As usual Joseph McCabe is a better guide.

★

REFERENCES in religious literature to "the devout Polish priest who made the great discovery of the revolution of the earth round the sun" must be corrected, McCabe said in his *Rationalist Encyclopedia*. Copernicus was of German, not Polish blood; "he was not a priest and not at all devout"; incidentally he did not discover the central position of the sun. "His uncle, one of the loose-living bishops of the time, got him elected—though he was not in orders and neither devout or virtuous—a canon of the cathedral solely in order to provide him with an income. He had graduated in medicine".

★

THE Old Bailey was the subject of Anthony Carson's "Around London" column in the *New Statesman* on August 13th. He recalled that the court stood on the site of Newgate Prison and how, in the old days, "condemned criminals were conducted in procession to St. Sepulchre's where a nosegay was given to the prisoner and he was urged to repent. Church bells were tolled and the procession continued down Snow Hill over the Fleet River along Tyburn Lane where the prisoner drank his last pint of porter or beer before execution".

★

WE can sympathise with the designers of road safety posters; they have a thankless task. But the latest effort—a little girl praying "... and keep us safe on the roads"—seems singularly inept. Unless it's an appeal to the gods behind the wheel.

★

WE wish to thank the Editor of the *Guardian* for permission to print the "profile" of George A. Woodcock, which first appeared in that paper on August 6th.

The Suppression of the Suppressionists

By R. C. R. ADKINS

"ARE we not brutes to call the act that makes us, brutish?" So wrote Montaigne three hundred years ago but, judging by the utterances of the Viewers and Listeners' Association, many still seem to think that sex is wrong although, as Pope Gregory said, it can be "excused" in marriage.

At the annual conference of the National Association of Head Teachers, the headmaster of Hurstmere Secondary Boys' School, Sidcup, Kent, said that "some so-called men of culture are advocating that literature, films and television should not be held in check by the ropes of convention". He added that these writers are advocating that sex should be brought out into the open.

The headmaster of St. Joseph's Primary School North Shields, Northumberland said: "These people are destroying the idea of monogamy and self-discipline in the young by their indulgent humanism, misapplied psychology and plain libertinism".

Is it however such a terrible thing to "bring sex out in the open?"

There is no evidence that sex crimes have increased but there is evidence that traditional moral attitudes can lead to serious inhibitions. A boy for example, who has been taught to think that sexual relations between men and women are somehow unclean may well become a homosexual.

A girl with strong religious background who has been told that sex is something which nice people do not discuss may dread the idea of intercourse. She may become a lesbian or she may marry but be completely sexually unresponsive.

Pre-marital intercourse is condemned by conventional moralists so that, according to this teaching, marriage is an essential prerequisite to sexual relations. A girl therefore, who naturally wants to undergo this experience, must get married first and, because she wants to gratify her curiosity, may rush into a completely unsuitable marriage which will bring her years of unhappiness. If however she already knew, before marriage, what sexual intercourse meant then she would be far more likely to choose the right partner for the physical side would not be the only consideration.

Is it indeed right to always condemn a yearning for acceptance and a joyous yielding to love. A refusal to surrender virginity may show a very limited conception of love.

It is also true that many psycho-analysts have reported cases where a brief experience of sex outside marriage has contributed to an improvement of sex in marriage.

All this does not take away from the fact that a happy married life blessed with children where the partners find their full happiness in each other is the great ideal. Promiscuity does not lead to happiness but equally so neither does a hard, and uncompromising, attitude to sex.

The suppressionists can do as much harm as the advocates of complete promiscuity. What we need is a balanced and sensible attitude to sex and the only way this can be achieved is by bringing sex out into the open.

At present we have in this country a very one-sided attitude to sex and by this I mean not that the BBC is "degrading the nation" as the Viewers and Listeners' Association appear to maintain but that we are still far too rigid—and hard—in our approach to sex.

We have to remember that men are still being sent to

prison because they are homosexuals while women who practise lesbianism are looked upon with disfavour. Not only therefore do we need to press for a change in the law so that there would no longer be any legal penalties in respect of sexual acts between consenting adults of the same sex but also for a change in social opinion so that a man could say that he was a homosexual, or a woman declare that she was a lesbian, without a finger of censure being lifted up against them.

A woman who has the misfortune to find that she has conceived an unwanted child has to resort to illegal and unqualified practitioners to obtain an abortion with grave risk to her own health.

We don't, it is true, seem to get many real summer days now but, on those rare occasions when the sun does shine a man—or woman—cannot expose his whole body to its health giving rays, even in places remote from built-up areas. Are we so ashamed of our bodies?

These are just a few of the things that are crying out for reform and which the suppressionists seem determined to maintain.

It is only by bringing things out in the open that we can see them as they really are and make a right judgment on them. This applies not only to sex but also to religion. Yet, as things are, Christians are most unfair to Humanists. The laws dealing with blasphemy make it illegal for atheists, or agnostics, to write, or speak, lightly about God. I fail to see how it can be blasphemous for him—or her—to poke fun at the Christian idea of God where a being who, on the one hand is supposed to be perfect love sends those who do not worship to a terrible, gruesome unbelievable Hell.

Christians, if they can find equal illogicality in the Humanist beliefs, are equally entitled to make fun of them but, as no jokes about these seem to be forthcoming, it appears that one of the differences between Humanism and Christianity lies in the logical approach of the former contrasted with the lack of logic of the latter.

Humanists should therefore have the same right as Christians to express their beliefs, without being restricted by outmoded laws on blasphemy on the BBC.

What we want is not suppression but expression—expression of our differing points of view so that the great enemy of mankind, ignorance is dispelled.

THEATRE

Magna Carta at the Mermaid

"Left-Handed Liberty", by John Arden now being performed at the Mermaid Theatre, London, was commissioned by the Corporation of London to commemorate the 750th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta by King John, and the Corporation have a right to be proud of the result of their initiative. We see the total untrustworthiness of John and most of the barons, and we see the dubious role of the Church—the Papacy emerging clearly as the enemy of all progress, despite the efforts of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Patrick Wymark as John is an amiable rascal, never suggesting the sadistic monster from whose brutal revenge—if contemporary records are to be believed—not even the children of nobles who had offended him were safe.

Memorable performances are given by Robert Edison as Pandolph, the Papal Legate and Sonia Dresdel, in a brief but electrifying appearance, as the Queen Mother.

M.McI

ON THE THRESHOLD

(Continued from page 275)

The belief that the threshold must not be trodden on was, and still is, so widespread that there is hardly a country in the world that does not observe some custom in connection with it.

The reason for the reluctance, and even fear, of touching the threshold springs from the religious or superstitious belief that the doorstep is not only a spot dedicated to some god or goddess—and thus also imparts sanctuary to anyone coming into the house, palace or temple—but that here is even some danger attached to it, if a careless or irreverent person should tread or sit on it.

Therefore, the practice of carrying a wife at marriage into her husband's house, is simply a precaution, lest she should inadvertently come into contact with the doorstep, hereby annoying "the watchers and keepers of the threshold" and thus make her married life an unhappy one! But as the insurance premium is not too heavy (depending on circumstances) all parties concerned generally enjoy the payment of it.

It is, perhaps, not widely known that in country-districts in Britain (and elsewhere) it is customary that, if a woman has a miscarriage, the foetus is buried under the doorstep, the idea being that it will give the soul a chance to reincarnate and thus come again into the same family. The custom does not stop at human beings, but extends also to farm animals which are supposed to be subject to the same laws. If a cow in a large dairy produces a calf prematurely, the remainder of the cows in the same shed are only too likely to follow suit. The superstitious preventative is to bury the abortive calf, with its legs stretching up, under the doorstep of the cowhouse. This will prevent the same mischance befalling the remainder of the herd, the belief being that the spirit of the buried calf will enter into one of the cows passing over its body and will thus be born again.

Passover is the correlative feast of Easter. Why is it called thus? Because the Israelites had indicated their dwellings to the "Angel of Death" by slaughtering a lamb and sprinkling its blood over the doorposts. Therefore only the Egyptian first-born were killed. So the exaggerated tale goes.

The Israelites themselves *leapt* over the threshold, "after it had been sanctified with the blood of the threshold-covenant lamb". This sounds rather more like an African medicine-man's formula. No need to draw yourself up, saying that you, highly civilised and rational being, don't do anything of the sort. Of course you do or, better said, your women-folk do!

In most old-fashioned houses, the doorstep is made of sandstone which is often painted red or made red with a "red stone", or is highly polished in a crimson colour by means of a "cardinal paste"—allegorical of the blood of a slain animal, sacrificed to keep evil spirits away!

Orthodox Jews—and Muslims too—affix to the right side doorpost of their houses or flats, a small metal or wooden cylindrical object, about two inches long, called mezuzah. Inside is a small parchment scroll with a verse from the Old Testament or Koran. This fetish or talisman is credited with giving protection to the dwelling, in the same way as an amulet is alleged to give protection to its wearer.

On many old houses in Britain and on the Continent, one can see, cut into the main-beam across the front, the Latin words: *Nisi Dominus Frustra*, which are also in Edinburgh's Coat of Arms. They are from the 127th Psalm. Unless the Lord [build the house, they labour] in vain [that build it].

(To be Continued)

Religion in the Philippines

By GONZALO QUIOGUE (Manila)

IN THE Philippines when a Catholic meets a Freethinker on the street, the former makes the sign of the cross. Upon seeing this the Freethinker sadly shakes his head and murmurs to himself: "The poor devil! He'll do anything to reach heaven!"

In the 16th century Christianity was forced upon the pagan Filipinos by their Spanish conquerors. "Be a Christian or else" threatened the Spaniards. These *conquistadores* never had it so good. They could easily get lands and women. They prospered and grew healthy on the fat of the land. The hard-boiled Filipino pagans could not see why Jehovah, the Christian God, was better than Bathala, the Filipino God, but the Spanish conquerors argued: "Our God is more powerful than your so-called god. See, our God gave us guns, gunpowder and swords. Your god could give you only bolos, spears, bows and arrows. Sabe, Indio?"

For many moons scattered native groups called *Barangays* held weekly meetings with their chiefs. And eventually they realised it was wiser to give in to the demands of their conquerors. Thus Christianity was accepted by the Filipinos.

Today in Catholic churches in the Philippines a casual visitor will see atop the altar the image of Jesus Christ. At the left of this painting or carving is inscribed: "A true God". At the right, "A true man".

Sceptics call this a dual personality—a sort of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. It is said that God, through Mary, transformed Himself into a man, Jesus Christ, the long-awaited Messiah of Christendom. But when Christ was dying on the cross, he said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

And referring to his torturers, he said: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!"

The dying Christ was obviously talking to Jehovah in heaven, regarded as God the Father. But there is only one God, Catholic eggheads insist, although Jesus Christ is also God. This problem had been supposedly solved by the invention of the Holy Trinity. One God with three personalities, and yet each personality a God, too. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Since there is only one God and the dying Christ was a part of that God, we can only conclude that the dying Christ talked to another part of that God! Catholic Filipinos, like most Catholics all over the world, think that the so-called mystery of the Holy Trinity is too profound for Freethinkers to understand. With the imaginary supernatural embellished in nonsensical mysteries nothing is impossible! The 32,000,000 God-believing Filipinos in 1965 are in the clutches of various religions as follows:

Catholics (Roman)	83.8 per cent
Protestants (American and English) ...	2.9 per cent
Aglipayans (Philippine Protestants) ...	5.2 per cent
Iglesia ni Kristo (Philippine Protestants) ...	1.0 per cent
Muslims	4.6 per cent
Buddhists (God-believing sects)	.1 per cent
Other religions	2.4 per cent

The number of Agnostics, Atheists, Rationalists and secular Humanists is not shown for two reasons: 1. The actual number of Freethinkers is relatively microscopic. 2. Freethinkers in the Philippines do not openly express their freethought, especially if it is atheistic. Most of them are university professors teaching natural science or philosophy, and they do not want to offend the God-believers who control the institution. A few years ago parents of students in the University of the Philippines excitedly

exhorted one another with: "Shall we let our sons and daughters be taught by atheists? Down with atheism!"

In a community of God-believers odium is commonly attached to atheism. Freethinking editors of newspapers and magazines behave likewise. They do not want to offend God-believing publishers, subscribers and advertisers. In the Philippines, as in other countries, God-believing employers knowingly or unknowingly freeze the atheism of their employees. Who can have the guts to express his freethought when his job depends on his silence? In most cases our stomachs are hopelessly in the grip of well-meaning, but misguided God-believing employers!

CORRESPONDENCE

CATHOLIC DELINQUENCY

It is almost impossible to obtain reliable and up-to-date figures on the relationship between juvenile delinquency and religious upbringing. We can, however, from data gathered during the past year, calculate the excessive number of Catholic children sent to approved schools, and the cost of their maintenance.

According to an article in the *Catholic Herald* for October 30th, 1964, "social workers have racked their brains for years to try to find out why the approved schools have such a high proportion of Catholic children—a quarter of the total—and why so many commit offences again so soon after they come out".

The recently issued White Paper on statistics relating to approved schools, remand homes and attendance centres for the year 1964, gives the number of new admissions to approved schools as 5,361. On a 10 per cent basis, the usually accepted figure, 536 of these should be Catholic, but there must actually be about 1,340. This means that in 1964 around 800 children were sent to approved schools who would presumably not have been there but for their Catholic upbringing.

The White Paper gives the weekly cost of maintenance as £15 3s. 6d. in 1963/4 and £16 13s. 5d. in 1964/5; an average of say £16 or £830 per annum; a total for one year of £664,000, shared equally between local authorities and the Exchequer. Nothing from the Church, naturally.

The following appeared in the *Catholic Herald* for November 20th, 1964: "At the annual meeting of the Catholic Moral Welfare Council, Fr. McCormack said many Catholics tended to shrug off the high percentages of Catholic delinquents by saying these were only nominal Catholics. But, he said, they were mistaken because figures he had obtained from Catholic approved schools showed that more than 90 per cent of the boys in them had spent from 3 to 10 years in Catholic schools". This is a clear indictment of the Catholic school system, especially when we learn that more than half the Catholic children are educated outside it.

Nothing will be done, of course, although the remedy is obvious. Cardinal Heenan told the Westminster branch of the Catholic Women's League: "We are about to spend enormous sums on Catholic schools in this diocese, more than ever before, millions . . . Many will say 'It is a waste of money', or 'Why bother at all?'. The answer is to keep the faith alive". (*Catholic Herald*, April 2nd, 1965).

Just so; never mind the damage to the children. And now the *New Statesman* (August 6th, 1965) reports a rumour that the Cardinal is to be offered a life peerage. For services to education?

R. J. CONDON.

JOSEPHUS ON JESUS

One time clergyman Mr. Micklewright, seems rather annoyed that I should quote from one of his rather obscure works, however, the passage was given because it served to underline the point I was seeking to make, and, Mr. Micklewright note, I did point out that you were a Secularist.

I am well aware of Mr. Micklewright's many changes during the course of his "intellectual development" or "mental evolution". As this has no bearing what-so-ever on the historicity or otherwise of Jesus, anymore than personal details about myself have, most of the questions Mr. Micklewright poses can be ignored. With reference to the FAES, this means Fellow of the Ancient Egypt Society. The Society was founded in the United States in the 1920s with Prof. Flinders Petrie as first President. The Saint Osmund Society was formed recently to encourage the use of and interest in Sarum Liturgy. As I very much doubt getting a

subscription out of Mr. Micklewright it would be a waste of time to give further details.

Mr. Cutner in his article "Where Stands Josephus?" takes issue with me for quoting from his book *Jesus—God, Man or Myth?* He claims that I have not read his book. Unfortunately the boot appears to be on the other foot for it is Mr. Cutner who displays a marked ignorance of his own published work. Mr. Cutner refers to my point drawn from page 3 of his book and states "Actually, I [Mr. Cutner] quoted Dupuis's opinion, and Mr. Strother quietly transferred that to me". The passage on page 3 I was referring to reads "The question we are to discuss is not whether, at the back of the Gospels, there was an obscure individual about whom we know literally nothing . . .". This passage is anything but a reference to Dupuis, who in fact is not mentioned on page 3 and only once on page 2. It is pointless commenting on the main part of Mr. Cutner's polemic, in particular when one reads comments such as "Even Christian scholars had to admit that logically the paragraph preceding the disputed passage and the one following could not be separated". This is a typical example of setting up one's own nine-pins and knocking them down, scholarship it certainly is not.

(Rev.) C. STROTHER, FAES.

GOOD GOD!

In a recent visit to a small country town my eye was caught by a note outside the cathedral. It read:—"We need £200,000. Help Us To Save The Cathedral". Whether the ecclesiastical big-wigs will collect this enormous sum one can only leave to conjecture. The unconscious humour of it will probably be lost on the local believers.

The idea of Christians appealing to mere mortals to save God's own house is too funny for words.

E. MARKLEY.

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The Freethinker

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TOWARDS the end of the last century, the village of Spaxton in Somersetshire acquired an unenvied notoriety so far as the concept of love be concerned. It was selected by Mr. Smyth Piggott, the leader of the free love sect, the Agapionites, for his "Abode of Love". Strange doings were unrolled as proceedings from the settlement where the aunts awaited the coming of the Lord. There was no marrying or giving in marriage in this kingdom of God with the result that spiritual brides produced material babies. For some years, the notoriety continued and then faded away as Smyth Piggott underwent the dissolution of earthly death and the first sounds of the Last Trump remained unheard. The day was to come when the last disciple had died and the once-notorious agapionite was no more.

The Rector of Spaxton

Yet Spaxton as an "abode of love" seems fated to notoriety. Its rector is the Rev. G. B. Watkins Grubb and recently there was a case in the Archdeacon's Court concerning his conduct in the parish. The charges concerned, so far as could be judged from the press, such matters as tearing down notices put up by the secretary of the Parochial Church Council or failing to call meetings of this body. A court of this kind meets before commissioners, a trained lawyer with lay assessors, and reports to the bishop. Mr. Grubb was found guilty of most of the charges and, under the Church Assembly Measure of 1947 creating the court, he was deprived of his benefice by the Bishop of Bath and Wells. For the moment, we forbear all further comment, as the defendant has given notice of appeal. But one fact did emerge with clear evidence. The parish was split into two warring factions. Mr. Grubb himself had been treated with the greatest hostility by one side such as undergoing pelting with bad eggs at a church meeting. Indeed, the commissioners censured one churchwarden and the secretary of the Church council for calculated rudeness to the rector. It is not clear whether or not the Bishop of Bath and Wells intends to deal with them penally in any way or whether he has power under the law to do so.

There are various highly critical aspects of the case which must not await comment until after the appeal has been heard. This body is the established Church and its disciplinary doings must affect the whole population, and therefore be related to wider conceptions of the enforcement of justice than would prevail in narrowly church circles. After the extremely unsatisfactory trial of Dr. Bryn Thomas in 1962, there was a reform of the church courts which came into force in August, 1964. It must not be overlooked that the Archdeacon's court exists within this reformed state of affairs or that, since August 1964, appeal to the Privy Council has been abolished. This means that the incriminated cleric has lost the general right of the citizen to carry his complaint to the Crown in person and that his appeal cannot get beyond a body composed of members of the Church of England in the narrower sense. The case for Mr. Grubb raises

questions of the sect-conception of the Church and a belief that certain parishioners are under a curse; questions to which the average Freethinker will scarcely be sympathetic. Yet the case as a whole should be watched closely in free-thought circles in order to mark down the next steps for the evolution of the administration of justice in the courts of the established Church as well as to raise basic questions concerning the extent to which these disciplinary bodies should rank as Crown courts.

But there is a far wider issue and the hell upon earth which Spaxton ecclesiastical seems to have been raises it in a new guise. Again and again, the argument is heard that churches do no harm whatever their

belief, that they encourage the development of the individual character and that society would therefore be the poorer morally without them. It is such a case as that of Spaxton which gives the lie to any such pretensions. The fact must be faced that churches are frequently the resort of ambitious cliques and used to fulfil the social ambitions of those who would be incapable of fulfilling them over a wider sphere. The present writer has known two bodies intimately, the one of a theologically liberal and Protestant type, the other of a more traditional and established order.

The World of the Chapel

So far as issues concerning the evolution of individual moral character were concerned, there was exactly nothing to choose between them. In the case of the smaller denomination, its great days of scholarship and cultural activity which existed a century ago were over. The ministry was largely recruited from the semi-educated who had been steeped in the particular tenets of the sect. At the centre was thrown up a dreary sectarian core made up of a group of *soi-disant* "leading ministers" who plotted and schemed among themselves. Congregations were trivial in size and content but made up largely of those who were seeking a social status and opportunity which was lacking to them in the world at large. Thus, one had the petty merchant who accounted for nothing during the week but put himself forward on Sundays as an amateur theologian. Others set out to dominate in the local chapel when life had denied them every opportunity of dominating elsewhere. The result was that they were quite cut off from the real flow of local life and merely survived as a narrow little clique imposing their views in a backwater. Almost every type of objectionable behaviour can be recalled over nearly twenty years, not forgetting the ex-confidence trickster who carried his formerly criminally fraudulent ways into religious cant and chapel insincerity. The type which Dickens knew so well in Chadband and Stiggins was prominent. Indeed, memories come flooding in of Mrs. Oliphant's once-famous novel, *Salem Chapel*, or the stories of Mark Rutherford with their especially unlovely pictures of Victorian dissent, whether of the Trinitarian or the non-Trinitarian variety. Circumstances have not changed greatly and, for the small tradesman wishing to exercise a bastard authority couched in a pious

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Abodes of Christian Love

By F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

claptrap, there is always the bogus moral and cultural world of the chapel.

The Church of England

Within the established Church, the atmosphere is different. The chapel had a liberal tradition politically. Nowadays, this merely means that most of the members are opposed to the Labour Party in contemporary politics, lack a political philosophy of any kind however rudimentary and incoherent, and that they are filled with a grim determination to hang on to whatever they possess at however great a moral cost. The established Church traditionally is wedded to Tory politics both in a philosophical and a party sense. As a result it stands for a caste system in society which means that the parish churches will provide public office for the well-to-do or for the successful business classes. There are always more of this type than can attain local status through such offices as government at large can provide. The more pushful will find their way to the local borough council with the wider opportunities which it offers for "getting on". Of the nucleus of the less able but equally self-assertive, some will turn to such functions as those of churchwardens or parochial church councillors. It is here that they will seek to dominate and will use the church to their own social ends. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England has little conception of the discipline of the laity. Thus, its moral dictates are largely bent to the popular clamour of persons of this type. Morals become very largely the general assessments made by the Tory Party in politics. Thus, a fairly strict though somewhat opportunist sexual morality goes side by side with the immoralities shown by the private profit motive in the modern world. At the top, the hierarchy will tend to side with the more influential laity in matters of local dispute. But, at the bottom, life in the parishes will appear in the crude and in the raw.

The Lot of Secularism

Enough has been said to cast a floodlight upon the more unlovely side of at least two denominations. This is not to say that they have not got any other side. But it is to point out that they possess a highly active side totally out of place in any body of people claiming moral leadership. I have no direct knowledge of the moral atmosphere within Roman Catholic congregations. But I would remark that the bellowing bigots which I have encountered from time to time, or the statistics of juvenile delinquency do not show up in any healthier way when they are contrasted with their Protestant parallels. One fact remains, of which the generalised behaviour at Spaxton would seem to be an outstanding example. It is merely that churches of any denomination contribute little or nothing to the evolution of a cultural or moral character of social worth, and that they do provide a home for upstarts and *parvenus* of the worst possible influence socially through their self-seeking and ignorant self-assertion. The secularist challenge to the Churches would be more than justified on these grounds alone, as seeking to eradicate an undesirable moral strain within society. But perhaps a note of caution may be urged in that these reflections are prompted by by the bear-garden at Spaxton. Bear-gardens are totally out of place in secularist circles, and anybody seeking to create such a background is merely sinking to the level of the Churches. Society today is in a moral turmoil, and it is the lot of secularism to give to it a moral leadership poised at the highest level. Certainly, if the Christian love of which we have heard from innumerable pulpits, ends by providing abodes of love of which Spaxton is now a nationwide notorious example, it is something for the loss of which society is far better off, and which calls for a constant secularist opposition.

Gnomes, Elves and Fairies

By H. CUTNER

IN OUR nursery days, of course, we believed wholeheartedly in the fairy world of Grimm and Anderson and the other writers who made the adventures and misadventures of the little people so appealing. What could a world be like without them? Nor was it only children who were their devoted followers — witness the delightful *Iolanthe*, the success of which has never withered since it was first produced in 1882. Alas, most of us, as we grew older, while still loving the stories told of fairy antics, have to admit that they were — stories, and nothing else.

But not so our Spiritualists. In their world of spirits, they saw no reason why elves, gnomes and fairies should not exist; and some forty years or so ago, a champion of their veritable existence appeared in no less a writer than the creator of Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He was a superb story teller, and in that capacity has always been one of my favourite authors; but by some extraordinary mischance he became obsessed with Spiritualism during (I think) the First World War, and afterwards he devoted his life in trying to make the world — as far as it was possible — believe in Spiritualism. He did not succeed, of course, but he did his utmost, and one of his last books was *The Coming of the Fairies*, in which he showed his belief in them was as strong as his belief in the spirits.

Why did he believe in fairies? Well, there appeared a number of photographs at the time showing a couple of little girls in a wood watching fairies dancing among the flowers — photographs which "experts" claimed as genuine. If you can photograph in this way veritable fairies — wings, ballet costumes, and all — they must have existed, and no greater proof than this is necessary.

The camera which took the pictures was of the old-fashioned plate type, and the photographer was a 15-year-old girl and "she snapped the shutter several times" we are informed, with her nine-year-old cousin as the model in the "fairy glen". The plates were developed and printed "with fantastic success all over the world" says Peter Chambers (*Daily Express*, May 24th).

I remember these photos quite well, and laughed at the idea that they could be considered authentic by anyone who had even an elementary idea of *practical* photography. I mean by this that almost anyone who had taken, developed, printed, and enlarged a photo himself, and had mastered a few technical processes, could not possibly believe that these snaps were genuine. Yet, as Mr. Chambers points out, there were photographic experts who actually vouched for these photos — though, even now, we do not know how one girl aged 9, and another 15, "worked the trick that fooled the experts of the world".

But it appears that the girl who took the photos is still living — now in her sixties — and Mr. Chambers went out to see her. Going over the story again after all these years made her laugh uproariously — and then she admitted that she did *not* believe in fairies, and though she declined to say how the photos were taken, she added: "Let's say they are pictures of figments of our imagination . . . and leave it at that."

That is, though it is an unsatisfactory ending to the story, we now know for certain "it was all a hoax". But I am afraid that Mr. Chambers is very innocent in such matters if he thinks that his exposure of the hoax will have the slightest effect on our all-believing Spiritualists. Does

(Concluded on page 284)

I Know What Religious Persecution Is

By JAMES N. SNAVELY

The following is from a speech of the author reporting the recent experience of his family and himself in the town of Lebanon, Pennsylvania. It was made to the annual meeting of the Greater Philadelphia Branch of the American Civil Liberties Union on December 12th, 1964, and printed in *Progressive World*, July, 1965.

I HAVE BEEN asked to give a brief outline of the lawsuits that my family and I are engaged in with the Lebanon (Pennsylvania) Suburban School Board. In order that you may better understand the problem we have it is necessary for you to realise that Lebanon is located in the heart of the Pennsylvania Bible belt. It is here that my forefathers, eight generations ago in 1730, had chosen to settle. It is a very old-fashioned, conservative community. In this backward city of some 30,000 it is common to refer to Jews as "kikes", to Italians as "wops", etc. Some of its citizens still believe in and practise "hexorie", by which they attempt to "put a spell" on a fellow inhabitant. And if you express doubt on any fundamental matter in the Bible they regard you as a tool of the Devil.

My father was for 18 years a superintendent of public schools in Delaware and author of a book on the Constitution. His whole life was devoted to education and to promoting mutual understanding among his fellow men. Had he lived to see your organisation (American Civil Liberties Union) function, it would have been the fulfilment of a dream for him. But the ACLU is looked upon in Lebanon by the majority of its citizenry as a Communist-front organisation, this image having been painted by the same local newspaper that calls for the impeachment of Chief Justice Earl Warren and encourages every other right-wing endeavour.

Approximately five and a half years ago when I sent my oldest child to school, the teacher gave her a card asking for my signature. This card provided for my stated permission for my little daughter to attend religious training classes in a nearby fire hall under the guidance of Child Evangelism, Inc. Needless to say I made the un-Christian move of refusing to sign the card. Several days thereafter I received a letter signed by the principal and explaining why I should sign the card. His letter said that last year 500 children had attended the religion classes regularly, that the school fully endorsed and supported this Bible study, and that a large financial contribution was made by the children last year to Christian missionaries overseas.

On the second Wednesday of this religious training my child reported that in her public school class of 37 all but one attended the religious course. The one who did not was she herself. I asked her what she and her teacher did in the empty school room during the time the religious training was in progress. She said that the teacher went to the fire hall to teach the religion class, while she (my daughter) remained alone in her regular class room. The following Wednesday I went to the school and verified this with my own eyes.

I was now becoming disturbed and I contacted the teacher at her room. She declared to me that the Bible was more important than all the school books and that there was nothing I could do about the matter. I then telephoned the principal. He said: "This is the way it is and this is the way it will continue, as it is legal under the released-time state law."

After several weeks I asked my daughter if the procedure had been corrected. She replied that her teacher

now remained with her at the school room and read Bible stories to her. One of the stories, she said, told of a group of children being put into a fiery pit and burned, but the children who had received Christ as their Saviour were not at all hurt. I was now becoming really concerned and I investigated the thing called Child Evangelism, Inc. I found that the majority of the teachers in this school belonged to the church which is known in this area as the "born again" Christian type. So I called Child Evangelism, Inc. to ascertain what they represented. I was told that a list of their officers and a copy of their faith pledge would be sent to me. The pledge stated that the King James Bible is the only true version of the will of God, that the member believes in Heaven and Hell-fire, and that he must be born again and devote himself to evangelistic work in spreading Christianity.

For almost four years I coaxed and argued with teachers, principal, superintendent and school board members. The answer I got from the principal was: "Have you been born again and received Christ into your heart? If not, Mr. Snavely, you would not understand." One board member said: "If I had my way, every child would be forced to read the King James version of the Bible."

Then finally the US Supreme Court handed down its decision on Bible reading and prayer in the public schools. When the school failed to conform to the law, I contacted the board members again and warned them that if they did not comply I would find a way to bring legal action. I was told by a board member that if I did so they would ruin me. At their very next meeting they passed a resolution to defy the Supreme Court's decision. The local newspapers immediately published editorials stating that there was no known atheist in the community, but that if there was anyone who objected to the school board's resolution he had better be quiet on the subject or life would be made unpleasant for him.

A Jewish lady called me and recommended that I get in touch with the American Civil Liberties Union, which I did. The director, Mr. Spencer Coxe, assured me that he would take up the matter with his organisation. I was immediately supplied with very able counsel in the person of Attorney General Goldberg of Harrisburg. A local newspaper then published an editorial to the following effect: "We have unimpeachable evidence that the character who brought the ultra-left-wing Civil Liberties Union into Lebanon to fight the local school board is none other than James N. Snavely, employed by the city of Lebanon as assistant parking meter supervisor, so don't be surprised if Mr. Snavely finds himself in the ranks of the unemployed at the start of the new year." The threat was carried out and my job was taken from me as of the first of January.

Suit was filed in Federal Court on my behalf and scheduled for hearing on February 11th, 1964. On February 10th I was dragged from my home, arrested by three policemen and an unidentified civilian and taken before a local Justice of the Peace, where I was charged with a two-year-old dog-law violation that had been thrown out of the courts a year and a half before. I was told by the Justice of the Peace that I must pay \$53 or go to jail.

The case was investigated by the Attorney General of Pennsylvania, who gave a severe tongue lashing to the Justice of the Peace and to the dog officer. The local courts promptly reversed the decision of the JP.

(Concluded from page 282)

This Believing World

THE REMARKABLE voyage across the Atlantic of the tiny ship, *Tinkerbelle*, ended with a hero's welcome at Falmouth for the lonely sailor, Robert Manry when he arrived safe and sound. But unless we missed it somewhere in the accounts of his journey, we cannot remember that he ever said he had arrived safely through God's help, or because of his trust and faith in Jesus, or even because he uttered the Lord's Prayer every night and constantly sang hymns like "Nearer my God to thee". In the past, God appears to have been appealed to by nearly every explorer or voyager. But we in our unbelieving days seem to do quite well without him. The conquerors of mountains and unknown lands trust their skill and equipment rather than God.

★

IN EIRE, however, Pendennis of the *Observer* (8/8/65) found "devotion to the Church goes deep". In fact, you buy holy water, and are told, "Oh bless you sir, no home in Ireland would be without it". Yet Pendennis also pointed out, "paupers prey on the city". His article on Dublin is worth reading, and he has quite a lot to say about the decline of the arts, particularly the theatre, for which Dublin especially was famous.

★

BUT HERE in Protestant England dissatisfaction with our sacred hymns, ancient and modern, seems increasing if only slowly. Canon Watts, Rector of Hambleden, Bucks. considers it time for "another revision of our Prayer Book" (*Daily Express*, 9/8/65). We could, he says "do with a whole heap more of really good hymns and hymn tunes". Probably, he is as sick of the solemn and reverent way most of the old ones are sung as, no doubt whatever the Lord himself must be. But where are "the really good hymns and tunes" to be found? Who can be expected to write them? After all, a good pop song can make more money in a week than any hymn, however holy, could make in a century. But why not offer a substantial prize, for a good pop hymn, words and music, to show as old General Booth used to say, that the Devil has not got all the best tunes.

★

IN THE meantime, the Very Reverend W. Hassey, Dean of Chichester, wants the Psalms to be pepped up by some real top swinging tunes (*Daily Mail*, 9/8/65). He wants Leonard Bernstein to provide them, for the composer of *West Side Story* is Jewish, and Bernstein has consented. But surely the point is not so much improving Church music as making it a medium bringing in converts? Will a Jew singing a pop Psalm immediately be convinced that he ought to be a Christian, and have a Messiah? Or will pop Jewish Psalms bring wandering sheep back to the Christian fold? What is the Dean's real intention?

★

SEVERAL "sad Christians" have been complaining to the *Daily Mirror* that, as one of them said, "the Church is not interested in you if you stop going". A Church member from the age of ten and a choir member, choirmaster and lay reader until 1954 when he had to resign owing to ill health, he had never seen or heard from a member of the Church or a clergyman. A 72-year old Bridgend Christian, an organist for 34 years, reported a similar experience. Nor did anyone call to see a London teenager "formerly a regular Church member", and then unable to attend for a few weeks. But previously when money was needed for church funds, she said, "they sent somebody to my home to find out how much I was prepared to give each week."

GNOMES, ELVES AND FAIRIES

(Concluded from page 282)

he really believe that Conan Doyle, if he were alive, would admit, especially with the experts behind him, that these Cottingley fairies (as they were called) were mere "creatures of the imagination"?

The biggest fraud I know of is spirit photography — though this does not mean I know all the ways used by the Spiritualists who practise it. But I do know a number of the methods. Let me give just a few details of what was called in America "the Great Hyslop Hoax". Professor Hyslop was one of the great early pioneers of Spiritualism and, when he died, many "circles" tried to get in touch with his "spirit". One of these was determined to get a spirit photograph of him under the direction of W. Van de Weyde, a professional photographer. Every effort was made to see that the rules laid down by Conan Doyle were strictly followed. These were: absolute control of plates, camera and photographer; the picture must be of a dead man; it must look like the dead man, but be different from any known portrait.

In his book, *Spirit Mediums Exposed*, Samri Frickell (1930) gives an account in full detail of what happened. A committee was formed, and they bought a new packet of plates. The medium was to go into a trance and a flashlight photo was to be taken of her and the committee, by Van de Weyde, and developed by him and printed. When this was done, sure enough there was a fine "spirit" photograph of the professor himself above the committee. Every possible precaution had been taken to prevent fraud, but it would take too long to detail them here. Yet it was as fraudulent as it could possibly be.

The box of plates was quite new, of course. But the box was very carefully opened by Van de Weyde and a plate taken from it. The professor had had his portrait taken by Van de Weyde some time before. The professor had chosen the portrait he liked best from several taken. The others he discarded — so Van de Weyde had a few quite unknown to anybody but himself. He copied one on to one of the plates in the new packet; this plate was put back, and the packet was carefully sealed again. This plate was of course the one exposed and later developed and printed in the committee's presence. Though all of them were convinced Spiritualists, even they were astonished to find such a perfect yet unknown portrait of Hyslop come up as a genuine "spirit". When Van de Weyde told the truth, and Frickell published exactly how easy it was to hoax a committee in spite of precautions, spirit photography suffered a severe exposure from which it has never recovered. In England, it is virtually dead. I could never get a single spirit photographer or medium to allow any test with my camera.

But reproductions of spirit photographs constantly appear in *Psychic News* as if the whole sorry story had never been exposed.

AKIN TO ABORTION

THIRTY-FIVE prominent American Catholics—six priests, including three Jesuits, a nun and 28 laymen—have, the *Catholic Herald* reported (20/8/65) urged the use of public funds to support research in birth control and implementing programmes for family planning. When making this known, however, Fr. Dexter Hanley SJ, indicated that they had laid down certain conditions in their manifesto. There was, for instance, to be no public promotion of "the controversial intra-uterine device". Upon the "limited information available", Father Hanley said, "this was akin to abortion".

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(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY. Every Friday, 8 p.m.: L. EBURY and J. A. MILLAR.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Bolton Humanist Group (Central Library, Bolton) Thursday, September 9th, 7.30 p.m. W. COLLINS "The National Secular Society."

Notes and News

SPANISH AND ITALIAN Communists have put forward proposals for a working alliance with Roman Catholics, according to an *Observer* report (22/8/65). "The Catholics are our main allies today in the struggle against Franco", said Santiago Alvares in the *World Marxist Review* (Vol. 8, No. 6). And he saw this as perhaps the most characteristic and encouraging feature of the Spanish scene. There was a retreat from anti-Communism, not only among Catholic workers; it was part of "a deep-going process in which efforts are now being made to renovate the Church in Spain, and to effect a radical change." The hero of the renovation was the late Pope John. But the Communists had a responsibility in stimulating it. Marxists had never said that socialism was "incompatible with the existence of religion among broad sections of the population" Senor Alvares added.

★

BUT WHAT about Marx and "the opium of the people"? Senor Alvares cited the immediately preceding passage: "Religious misery was at one and the same time the expression of real misery and a protest against the real misery", etc. It was the "opium" phrase that had been most often quoted, the Senor said; and this was correct and necessary, generally speaking, considering that the ruling classes had always used religion as a drug. But this was "not the only aspect Marx had in mind". Logic tells us, Senor Alvares concluded, "that the only way to test the two positions—the Marxist and the Catholic—is to begin right now joint actions to reconstruct society

and to advance, through successive stages, to the creation of a society where both ideologies will be put to the test. So why not make the experiment?"

★

IT IS WELL, in the circumstances, to look, not only at the words immediately preceding "the opium of the people", but those immediately following. "The abolition of religion," Marx went on, "as the illusory happiness of men, is a demand for their real happiness. The call to abandon their illusions about their condition is a call to abandon a condition which requires illusions."

★

THE *Observer* also detected "peace signs" between church and state in Poland. In the view of one leading Catholic layman, each side could well agree to lay down their arms on the present demarcation of their powers" and "within three years Poland would have established some sort of official relationship—perhaps even diplomatic—with the Vatican". Polish Communists have failed, the *Observer* said, to make a success of the lay atheistic movement they have encouraged. Intelligent, free-minded men have gathered around the magazine *Argumenty*, but their league has only 40,000 members, and their publications hardly sell. "Freethinking is indeed something which flourishes only in a middle-class, liberal environment", the *Observer* commented, and "between Communism and the Cardinal, there is precious little soil for its roots."

★

SECULARISM, according to Fr. Charles Davis, "is a necessary stage in the advance of the Christian faith". Many men had lost their faith, Father Davis told an ecumenical conference at Leicester University, "but the faith lost by the average man was an imperfect faith. It was simply taken for granted as part of the culture in which one lived" (*Catholic Herald* 20/8/65). With this last statement, we may agree: we cannot agree that the situation presages an "advance" of Christianity. Nor did the Anglican, Father Martin Jarrett-Kerr, entirely share Father Davis's optimism. Indeed he saw danger in it. "People won't be saved if they don't want to be", said Father Jarrett-Kerr. "Men are still free to say 'no' to God even if the revelation offered to them is only implicit". Faith did not provide ready-made answers to all problems. "We've got to look for a different kind of certainty", he went on. "The more important a human activity is, the less possible it is to produce the kind of certainty one has in mathematics". Clergymen, it will be noted, are a little less sure of themselves—and their faith—these days.

★

DOROTHY ROBERTS, Hon Secretary of the Humanist Teachers' Association, informs us that there is to be a further discussion on the joint Christian/Humanist statement on religious education. A meeting will be held on Sunday, October 3rd at 6.30 p.m. at 13 Prince of Wales Terrace London, W.8, at which H. J. Blackham—one of the signatories of the statement—will be present. The HTA has already discussed the statement once, but wants to have the opportunity of talking it over with Mr. Blackham before deciding whether to support it. Teachers wishing to join the Association should write to Miss Roberts at 213 Pennymead, Harlow, Essex.

★

THE National Council for Civil Liberties publication *Customs*, price 1s. 6d., deals with the formalities involved in entering or leaving the country—where one may land, what duty-free goods the holidaymaker may bring in with him and what information the Customs officer may demand. It is the third of the NCCL's series of citizen's guides the other two being *Arrest* and *Mental Health*.

On the Threshold

By GEORGE R. GOODMAN

(Concluded from page 279)

"THOU shalt not seethe a kid on its mother's milk". At first glance, the impression is created that we have here to do with a highly humane injunction which abhors the cruelty in thought of boiling the offspring in the milk of its own mother. Alas, when investigated, it turns out to be a deeply rooted superstition of many nomadic tribes, right up to our times, that boiling the milk in a pot is like boiling it in the cow's udders and would certainly result in the drying up of the liquid.

And, as nomads and pastoral tribes depend so much more on milk than on the produce of fields and gardens, it is obvious that they cannot run the risk of injuring their valuable female animals on which they depend for their daily sustenance.

There is even nowadays amongst the Muslims of Morocco and Sierra Leone, a deep aversion to boiling milk, as they believe that any injury done to the milk would be sympathetically felt by the cow, who would in consequence, cease to give milk. Many tribes in Central and Eastern Africa very much share this belief and, for this reason, are reluctant to sell milk to Europeans.

Moreover, according to a medieval writer, there existed amongst the ancient inhabitants of Canaan an autumnal custom to boil a kid in its mother's milk and then, as a magical rite, to sprinkle the milk on trees, fields, orchards and vineyards, believing that in this way they would render them more fruitful in the following year. It is quite likely that the ancient law-maker had this particular superstitious rite in mind when he forbade the Israelites to copy this objectionable custom.

What is even more astonishing is that the original Ten Commandments had the prohibition, viz. not to seethe a kid in its mother's milk, as number 10.

According to Prof. K. Budde (*History of Ancient Hebrew Literature*). J. Wellhausen, Prof. R. H. Kennett and Sir James Frazer (*Folk-lore in the Old Testament*), the original decalogue ran as follows:—

1. Thou shalt worship no other god.
2. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.
3. All the firstborn are mine.
4. Six days shalt thou work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest.
5. The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep in the month when the corn is in ear.
6. Thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, even in the first-fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.
7. Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread.
8. The fat of my feast shall not remain all night until the morning.
9. The first of the firstfruits of thy ground thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord thy God.
10. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk.

The most significant aspect of this earlier decalogue was the total absence of any code regulating moral and social behaviour. It was entirely a set of ritualistic decrees, issued by some very exacting materialistic priests who demanded the uttermost farthing of their tithes and strictest adherence to their ritualistic rules and vested interests.

How utterly fatuous, for instance, the injunctions "the fat of my feast shall not remain over night", and "the blood of my sacrifice must not be offered with leavened bread". Then the very profitable decree "all the firstborn are mine". These astute priests lived literally on the fat of the land, (like the priests in Roman Catholic countries today!) for they received not only the thousands of sacri-

fices and gifts of meat, poultry, showbreads, firstfruits, wine and harvest donations, but also the first born of all animals and male children (girls didn't count, they were of no commercial or ecclesiastical value!)

The boys could be "redeemed" against payment of five shekels and even today a Jew must bring his first-born son on the 31st day after his birth to the synagogue where he is redeemed with a lot of rigmarole. The father is then mulcted of a "redemption sum" suitably adjusted to his income and standing. This has nothing to do with the circumcision ceremony, which is performed on the eighth day and also involves the happy father in the payment of further shekels.

Historians and pious Jews may deny the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (588 BC) and may possibly say that the 70 years of Babylonian captivity were a great calamity, yet, actually, they were "a blessing in disguise". For the Israelites who had so far, been a crude, nomadic people with very little culture, were suddenly brought into contact with a very high civilisation.

In the 18th century BC, Hammurabi, King of Babylon had already a set of moral and social rules which were the administration of the ancient world. It was the most complete and perfect manual of Babylonian laws, comprising amongst others, such subjects as: the administration of justice, the tenure of property, trade and commerce, marriage and family, slaves, assaults, professional conduct, and agriculture and wages. Penalties were in accordance with the social status of the offender, and one cannot but admire the thoroughness of this wise king who lived in a period (lying back 4000 years) when "might was right".

Copies of Hammurabi's Code were also found at Nineveh and there is no doubt that when the three Israelite tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi were allowed by the Persian King Cyrus (who, in his turn, had conquered Babylon) to return to their own land, the Israelite priests drastically revised the decalogue and then added some of the moral precepts which they had learned during their sojourn in Babylon.

How did the priests who wanted to alter the Ten Commandments, erase six of the purely ritual ones and replace them by six moral, ethical and social precepts? Very simply, really. They invented the story that Moses, when he came down from the Mount Sinai and saw that the Children of Israel had made themselves (under the direction of Aaron, if you please!) an Egyptian Bull (Apis) and danced around it, he became so angry that he threw the tablets down and smashed them. Then Moses had to go up again, received a new and altered set of Commandments, and that was that. No difficulty at all.

The tablets, by the way, were not made of stone, but of clay and written on *both* sides (Ex. 32, 15) and when the clay is fresh one can write on it quite easily with a pointed metal pencil called style. Moreover, the priests had no need to worry that anybody would find the original shorthand notes of Moses, because, according to the story, they had been destroyed!

Incidentally, because Moses is said to have covered his head when he talked to the Deity on Mount Sinai, no prayers can be recited without the head being covered either by a skull-cap or a hat, irrespective of whether the

happens in the home or the synagogue, and whether the person is a layman or a rabbi. Skull-caps and birettas are also worn by popes cardinals, bishops and priests, but not by the ordinary folk who are told to take off their caps as a sign of respect.

Although the injunction "thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk" was removed from the decalogue, it still formed part and parcel of the dietary laws, so much so that, owing to the scores of rabbinical additions during the Middle Ages, it became a veritable burden to the Jewish housewife. Cutlery, plates and utensils used for food containing milk products, may not be used for dishes containing meats or fats, and vice versa. Consequently, a family has to provide itself with 1. a complete set of table ware and pots for "milky" dishes; 2. a complete set of utensils for "meaty" dishes; 3. a complete set for Passover "milky" dishes; 4. a complete set for Passover "meaty" dishes. And if the people are well-to-do and do a lot of entertaining, then they must have another double set for guests or special occasions.

Moreover, flesh and milk are never cooked in the oven together nor placed on the table at the same time; different table-cloths have to be used too.

A meat-dish may follow a milk-dish, if the partaker waits half an hour, but a milk-dish may *not* follow a meat-dish so quickly; the time is then extended to 2-6 hours (according to local custom) because meat is not quickly digested and remains in the stomach so much longer. Tea or coffee served after a meat-dish are therefore without milk.

There are innumerable injunctions and instructions on what to do when a drop of milk falls on to "meaty" utensils or cutlery and vice versa, or when a milk spoon falls into a substance like meaty soup; or a meat-knife is accidentally used to cut butter or cheese.

Many tribes in Africa have similar rules and evince a strong aversion to the eating of meat with a milky dish; the boiling of milk is very rarely countenanced, because it would adversely affect the cows of a herd; it might even result in the drying up of the milk-supply.

Thus, the prohibition not to boil a kid in its mother's milk was originally directed against the objectionable magical rite of sprinkling the milk thus obtained on to fields and trees in order to produce a fruitful harvest. The law-giver (whoever it was) had this, no doubt, in mind and did not want the Israelites to ape this silly custom.

But, during the last 2,000 years, rabbinical subtlety and inventiveness embroidered this injunction to such an extent that it became far too cumbersome to observe. In consequence, many modern Jews have ceased to observe the highly intricate dietary laws and have adopted a modified form, more in accordance with 20th century conditions. For, when the rules were made, the Jews lived in ghettos, and enamelled, nickel or chromium-plated utensils and pans were unknown and stainless steel had not yet been invented.

As in Roman Catholicism, too much rigidity and regimentation often produces antipathy and aversion and, thus, defeats its own object.

MR. MICKLEWRIGHT ON TV

Our popular contributor and author of Views and Opinions this week, F. H. Amphlett Micklewright can be seen on television on September 12th, when he will appear in the ITV programme *Sunday Break* in discussion with the Methodist Lord Soper. We only need tell readers that Mr. Micklewright is as lively a speaker as he is a writer. His erudition are already known to them.

Points From New Books

ALFRED JARRY was born in 1873 in Laval and died in Paris in 1907. The surrealists doted on tales of his eccentricity such as his habit of taking loaded pistols into cafés and firing them into mirrors to ruffle "the calm", and Jarry has been hailed as the father of the Theatre of the Absurd. His best known play is *Ubu Roi*, which was produced when the author was twenty-three. This work has been available in translation by Barbara Wright since 1951, and was published by the Gaberbocchus Press who later, in 1961, produced in collaboration with New Directions of USA a paperback edition. Both editions have illustrations by Franciszka Themerson. The play itself has the vitality of a gloriously outrageous schoolboy joke.

Now Roger Shattuck and Simon Watson Taylor have edited *The Selected Works of Alfred Jarry* (Methuen, 45s.). Perhaps this book does little to add to the author's literary reputation — for the key piece will always be *Ubu Roi*; but it does provide us with some happy curiosities such as an article which describes The Passion as if the whole business were "an uphill bicycle race".

Then there is a translation of an article, in the form of a dialogue, which Jarry wrote for *The Wild Duck*, a French anti-clerical paper named after the Ibsen play. Here, among many other ingenious and blasphemous devices, the author discusses the possibility that the famous Manneken-Pis statue in Brussels could be given a few legends. First, it could be announced that the statue does not represent a little boy who offended by peeing on a holy procession and in consequence was condemned — a new and Christian Wandering Jew — to continue his act until The Last Judgment. No. And it would now be suggested that the statue is really a miraculous effigy of Jesus dispensing the stream of blessings to the world in a symbol of baptism. It could be hinted that during the human life of Our Lord vegetation grew miraculously and reached almost tropical abundance wherever he performed certain natural functions.

Anyway, once such an atmosphere of piety has been established, statues of the Virgin and Child could be converted into statues of the Virgin and the Manneken-Pis. A fine new market. A baptismal font could receive the overflow and an alms box the offerings of the astonished faithful!

Generally, it is unforgivable for a reviewer to give readers a hint of the plot mechanism in a novel of suspense. Yet I believe many freethinkers may have missed *The Road To Hell* by Hubert Montheilhet (Chapman & Hall, 18s.) because they have been unaware of the special character of the story. Therefore, in this case, saying something about the core of the book can only bring new readers, since M. Montheilhet's brilliant notion is that psychoanalytical sociologists carry out sexological surveys in a small French town by hiding tape recorders in the confessional.

The results are extremely funny and mysterious. The investigators consider such problems as the measure of control that such a religious exercise as confession exerts over the acts of the believer, and they decide that confession is just a garbage chute. Religion is revealed to be not an originating force of behaviour but a mere epiphenomenon. Meanwhile, the most bewildering things happen in the town, and the local Abbé is given a bizarre penance for his sins of the flesh. A most intelligent caprice by a cool writer of adult mysteries.

I KNOW WHAT RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IS

(Concluded from page 283)

The Federal Court hearing was re-scheduled for February 24th, 1964. Several days prior to this hearing, the school board met and rescinded its resolution regarding the religious training course in favour of a resolution calling for a mandatory course of study *about* the Bible. The Federal judge, with the assurance of the board's attorney that there would be no prayer or Bible reading, ruled that he would maintain jurisdiction of the case for 90 days, thereby giving the board time to prepare and submit its new course.

The local newspaper had, in the meantime, carried a front-page picture of my wife and myself with the caption: "Admits to being the instigator of a plot to remove the Holy Bible from the schools." It mentioned again that I worked for the city of Lebanon. Since that day to the present this newspaper has run editorials, public letters, twisted news stories and pictures, tearing my family and me apart, and portraying the American Civil Liberties Union as a Communist front.

Several further extensions of time were granted by the Federal judge to the school board. The latest brainstorm and means to circumvent the law by the board is now in the hands of the State Department of Instruction. This new course, which was to have been based on the literary and historical value of the Bible, is actually made up to a large extent of Bible "story books".

Since the suit was filed there have been many incidents showing the utter contempt that this school district has for the law of the land. For example, one teacher told her pupils to line up along the wall, those that go to church on one side of the room and those who do not attend church on the other side. The count was 30-some to 3, my son being one of the three who did not go to church. All three of my children have, as late as the present school term, been told by their teachers at prayer time to "bow your heads, close your eyes, fold your hands and pray." This was testified to in Federal court and admitted by the teachers concerned. My son and another child were forced to repeat the Lord's Prayer in front of the class because they failed to close their eyes during the first prayer. For their failure to conform my children have been taunted and physically abused by other children in the school.

In this one year the case has created for me and my family a lifetime of such personal experiences as I would have expected to read about only in a history like that of the Salem witchcraft days long ago. There have been a few bright moments, however, brought to us in our mail from the country at large, though local letters have contained threats on our lives or advice to "go to Russia". Our greatest encouragement has come from our contacts with Attorney General Goldberg, Spencer Coxe of the ACLU, and the outside news media, which have all been humane and understanding. I would like to close by expressing my thanks to the ACLU and its representatives. It is the one American organisation that seems to understand the whys and the wherefors of that great document — the Constitution of the United States.

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CORRESPONDENCE

I was very interested in Mr. Quigogue's article in the edition of Friday, July 30th, because I am, at the moment, studying Schopenhauer's Essay on "The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason."

May I quote some extracts from the abstract of this essay, translated by Haldane and Kemp? (The essay appeared in 1813):—

Chapter II . . . Schopenhauer in this chapter traces historically the forms in which the principle had been stated by his predecessors, and their influence. He points out that in Greek philosophy it appeared in two aspects—that of the necessity of a ground for a logical judgment, and that of a cause for every physical change—and that these two aspects were systematically confounded. The Aristotelian division, not of the forms of the principle itself, but of one of its aspects, the causal, exemplified a confusion which continued throughout the Scholastic period. Descartes succeeds no better. His proof of the existence of God that the immensity of his nature is a cause or reason beyond which no cause is needed for his existence, simply illustrates the gross confusion between cause and ground of knowledge which underlies every form of this ontological proof. "That a miserable fellow like Hegel, whose entire philosophy is nothing but a monstrous amplification of the ontological proof should dare to defend this proof against Kant's criticism of it is an alliance of which the ontological proof itself, little as it knows of shame, might well feel ashamed. It is not to be expected I should speak respectfully of people who have brought philosophy into disrespect." Spinoza made the same confusion when he laid it down that the cause of existence was either contained in the nature and definition of the thing as it existed, or was to be found outside that thing. The true picture of Spinoza's "*causa sui*" is Baron Munchhausen encircling his horse with his legs, and raising himself and the horse upwards by means of his pigtail, with the inscription "*causa sui*" written below.

Chapter IV . . . When a new state of one or more objects makes its appearance, it must have been preceded by another on which it regularly follows. This is causal sequence, and the first state is the cause, the second the effect. The law (of causality) has thus to do exclusively with the changes of objects of external experience, and not with things themselves, a circumstance which is fatal to the validity of the cosmological proof of the existence of God. It follows also from the essential connection of causality with succession that the notion of reciprocity, with its contemporaneous existence of cause and effect, is a delusion . . .

Chapter VIII . . . In conclusion, Schopenhauer points out that just because the principle of sufficient reason belongs to the *a priori* element in intelligence, it cannot be applied to the entirety of things, to the universe as inclusive of intelligence. Such a universe is mere phenomenon, and what is only true because it belongs to the form of intelligence and can have no application to intelligence itself. Thus it is that it cannot be said that the universe and all things in it exist because of something else. In other words, the cosmological proof of the existence of God is inadmissible.

The above extracts were taken from an appendix to the third volume of *The World as Will and Idea*, by Arthur Schopenhauer translated from the German by R. B. Haldane, and J. Kemp, in three volumes, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

The reason I was so interested in Mr. Quigogue's article is that he referred to the ontological and cosmological "proofs" of the existence of God.

JOHN C. SUTHERLAND

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The Freethinker

THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

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A GREAT deal has been said during discussions concerning the present social revolution in sexual behaviour concerning bastardy and the statistics showing the rise in the number of illegitimate births. The statistical facts have been used a great deal by churchpeople to illustrate claims concerning a rising tide of immorality. As a result, there has been a tendency to censure the unmarried parents and to exhibit some signs of the social disapproval which is commonly shown towards the offspring. But the curious fact never seems to be discussed within church circles. It is the historical attitude towards bastardy in Western Christian civilisation and the somewhat complicated picture which emerges. By treating it purely as an issue arising out of sexual morality, the Churches too often forget that they are dealing with a question which is primarily legal and which has at its main import the social and legal status of the bastard child.

Feudalism and Canon Law

As the canon law developed throughout the Middle Ages, the question of legitimacy was first and foremost one of inheritance. Feudalism formed the medieval economic order with its basic foundation in land possession and, within the feudal system, it was the heir-at-law who inherited the realty or property in land. The heir had to be traced upon intestacy, and this led to a complicated racking down of eldest sons through the male succession. Firstly, descendants had to be sought by this means and, if the succession failed, the line was sought in ascendancy. In the end, the heir might prove to be somebody far removed from the intestate and possibly quite unknown to him. Tracing the heir upon intestacy was a complicated business and remained the law of England till 1925. Sometimes complications would arise through the lack of proof of the validity of a long past marriage or of the succession involved in a claim. The long forgotten novel by Samuel Warren, *Ten Thousand a Year*, turns upon this very point, as does the historical Tichborne case which convulsed England a century ago. Within the feudal system, the bastard had no legal place. He was a *filius nullius* and could not inherit upon an intestacy. The question of legitimacy became therefore one of primary importance and the bastard was a person of social disrepute, just because he was economically landless.

It is interesting that this social disreputability did not extend to a bastard who had been endowed by will with lands or wealth. He could take his place within society, and could even be nominated to a throne in an age when hereditary succession lacked the strictness of its later interpretation. A very good example was that of William, Duke of Normandy, a bastard who had been nominated to the throne of England by Edward the Confessor. As William the Conqueror, he seized the English throne, and the circumstances of his birth had no sort of bearing upon the regal issue. For the feudal order, the question was not so much one of moral order as of primogeniture, descent through the eldest male heir. The legalism im-

plied had little to do with Roman law but was the order of overlord and vassal which had originally taken shape among the Frankish barbarians. One of the most curious historical pictures is the manner in which the Middle Ages sought to weave together the Hebrew legends with the barbarian legal heritage. Thus, the sacramental view of marriage derived from Christian theology was something which had to be expounded in the strict terms of a feudal economic order springing from very different roots.

It must be recalled that the feudal economic order was interrelated to the canon law of the church and that the two things were not static but in process of development. Marriage itself presented problems at the formal level. For the medieval canonist, a marriage was contracted by two people freely taking each other as husband and wife for life with monogamous intentions, in the presence of witnesses. Despite a famous nineteenth century legal decision, *R. v. Millis*,* it is by no means certain that the presence of an episcopally ordained priest was necessary. In essence, this forms the English common law view of a valid marriage which was only barred by statute as late as 1753 by Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act. Again there were extensive grounds for nullifying a marriage and a child of a nullified marriage was bastardised from its birth even though this might have taken place long before the pronouncement of the decree. It was undoubtedly the practical difficulties involved which led the canon lawyers to claim by the early thirteenth century, that a child born to parents who later married was thereby legitimised. This view might seem to be an act of mere justice but it roused the ire of the barons whose lands were held in terms of feudalism and primogeniture. For them, it suggested changes in the law which weakened the position of the baron claiming to be seised of land, and it must be recalled that the whole of medieval politico-economic life turned upon the issue of ownership, seisin and possession of land. It was the barons who resisted this legal innovation to the full, a point made by F. W. Maitland in his great work, *Canon Law in the Church of England*. Finally, in 1284 at the Council of Merton, the barons were able to block this suggested change in the law. In fact, it never became the law of England till 1926.

Legitimation Acts

Subsequent legislation with regard to bastardy has been of two types. One set of laws has approached the whole question of legitimation. In 1926, a child was legitimised by statute at the marriage of the parents if they could in fact have married at the time of birth, and an illegitimate child was allowed under certain circumstances to inherit from its intestate mother. The Legitimation Act, 1959, extended this principle to children whose parents were not free to marry at the time of their birth. It is not without interest that both Acts passed through Parliament despite the misgivings of the Church of England, a fact which in itself shows how much of the history of the subject had been forgotten. The other set of statutory

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Poor Bastard

By F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

changes fortified the position of the maintenance of the illegitimate child, whether it be in terms of an affiliation order made by the justices against the putative father, a matter closely related to the evolution of the Poor Laws, or the maintenance of an illegitimate child who has been received as a child of the family in the full legal sense of the term. Of course, these pieces of legislation had nothing to do with sexual morality but were merely concerned with the economic aspects of the upkeep of the child.

Social Opprobrium

Again, the conception of the family had changed. The medieval view of the family persisted till much later, and was far nearer to a clan conception than anything else. This fact is underlined by the whole question of the tracing of the heir and the legal view of the family as a particular facet within a social order turning upon land holding. The high individualism ushered in by *laissez faire* economics looked upon each household as a separate and individual family and failed to relate the group to the possession of land. The arrival of a bastard child produced other economic and social complications, with the result that bastardy had the stress of nineteenth century social opprobrium laid upon it. The Churches were not slow to cash in upon the new situation and to talk in a moral manner totally unknown to the feudal period or even within aristocratic eighteenth century circles. Indeed, the well-known medieval bar against the ordination of an illegitimate son was not so much due to the moral question as to the fact that the *filius nullius* was outside the feudal order. The bastard daughter was of very minor concern in medieval eyes. As the feudal order was masculine in conception and women stood outside it, it was a matter of little moment that the bastard girl stood outside the law.

Christian and Freethinker

Several facts stand forth clearly from this summary of the evolution of the law of England on the matter. The attitude towards the bastard arose historically out of feudal land holding, but the barbarian feudal theory of primogeniture could only strike root to the extent that it did through the approval of the Church. Later views of bastardy among Christians have usually been extremely cruel to the child and these moral attitudes have arisen as a legacy from the dead feudal past. For the utilitarian moralist, the whole question of marriage and legitimacy is one which turns upon its social usefulness. He is con-

* *R. v. Millis* (1844), 10 Cl. and Fin. 534 (HL). This case is of considerable importance as it laid down that the presence of an episcopally ordained priest was necessary to establish the validity of a common law marriage in England and Ireland. It did not extend the principle to settled or conquered colonies or to other parts of the world where the local marriage customs were inappropriate. But as an historical point, it is commonly held that *R. v. Millis* was wrongly decided. Before the decree of the Council of Trent in 1563, no religious ceremony was necessary. A declaration by the parties was all that was necessary. "I take you as my wife (or husband)" made the marriage binding immediately whilst "I shall take you as my wife (or husband)" made the marriage binding upon consummation. The custom grew up of marriage in face of the Church after the publication of banns (unless these were dispensed by papal or episcopal licence) and with the consent of the parents of parties under 21 years of age. The marriage was contracted at the church door and followed by the nuptial mass in church. As P. M. Bromley points out (*Family Law*, pp. 35 *et seq.*), the common law favoured the growth of the custom on evidential grounds. Thus developed the rule that the wife was not dowable unless she was married at the church door and certain other proprietary rights may have been involved. Gradually, these common law motives were forgotten and the stress shifted to the priestly presence. Finally, it was demanded by the Council of Trent. But the Tridentine decrees did not extend to England, the breach with Rome having already taken place in 1535 and the common law position in England would seem to be governed by the older legal history.

cerned with the well-being of man within this world and not with any transcendent moral theory or sacramental theology of marriage. In an age which has sought to pare away by statute the whole difference between legitimacy and illegitimacy, the way should be open for further reforms of the law. Certainly, every step should be taken to project the social interests of the child born out of wedlock. Christian denunciations and threats can scarcely assist this end. It is for the Freethinker to recall the strange past history of the subject and to remind the Christian that, in view of this history, he would be well advised to leave the whole subject alone at the present time. His heritage of feudalism and feudal economic orders with their legal implications is as dead as the creed which gave to them a theological approval.

Predictions

THIS month will see the opening of the fourth and final session of the Vatican Council, expected—as the *Evening News and Star* remarked (26/8/65)—to be "the most difficult and momentous". The 2,000 or more bishops have to clear eleven decrees for final publication, and clashes between the progressives and the conservatives are inevitable. The world is waiting, said the *News* for "the supreme legislative assembly of the world's 500 million Roman Catholics to give its last word on problems which involve both the Christian and non-Christian worlds". They range, the paper said, from reforming the Church's structure to the moral implications of nuclear warfare: from anti-Semitism to a modern interpretation of the Bible: from marriage and the family, to the position of the missionary in a post-colonial era.

In fact, the importance of the Council has been—and continues to be—vastly exaggerated, especially since the advent of Pope Paul. We have never claimed abnormal prophetic powers, but we confidently predict that if the world is waiting for any revolutionary pronouncements, it will be disappointed.

Equally confidently we predict—apropos another report in the *Evening News and Star*—that other people will see the sea serpent of "monstrous size" with a head like a turtle and a shiny black scale-covered body, that the wife of an American Army officer and nine others saw in Lake Garda, Italy. Future viewers have the advantage of the American lady's description to begin with. The "thing". Mrs. Camilla Finglet said, "raised its head above the surface and arched its neck when we started to shout a warning. It swam away like a snake, its body breaking water as it crested. It must have been at least 50 feet long". Mrs. Finglet apparently didn't mention whether it snorted fire from its nostrils. But it is clear from her description that she doesn't know how a snake swims.

A REMINDER FOR SUNDAY

We remind readers that the ITV *Sunday Break* programme on September 12th will be a discussion between the Methodist Lord Soper (the Rev. Dr. Donald Soper) and our contributor F. H. Amphlett Micklewright, a member of the Executive Committee of the National Secular Society.

MORALS WITHOUT RELIGION

and other essays

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Flight to the Stars

By F. A. RIDLEY

IF as the late Joseph McCabe once phrased it, the nineteenth century may be justly termed "the century of stupendous progress" on this planet, the twentieth century gives every indication of being equally so; progress we hasten to add of a cosmological and not a theological kind. For the sequence of extra-terrestrial events since the first Russian Sputnik went into orbit in 1957 would have appeared utterly incredible even as recently as Good Queen Victoria's "golden days". In earlier ages of faith, they would undoubtedly have been ascribed to the direct agency of the first space traveller from Heaven to Hell, "Old Nick" himself.

Since it is proverbial that the first step is the hardest and since the pioneer era of extra-terrestrial expansion now appears to be nearing its end, we may expect the closing decades of this century will witness expansion of mankind's contact with other worlds. For there is every prospect that such hitherto exclusively religious phrases as, say, heaven and earth, and/or the next world or even the descriptive adjective celestial, will come to acquire a cosmological, instead of an exclusively religious significance.

The almost illimitable prospects of mankind's future expansion in outer space, form the subject matter of a most remarkable book just published: *Flight to the Stars* by James Gordon Strong (Temple Press, 25s.). In the course of his inquiry, Mr. Strong, an engineer by profession, raises the whole vast question of (in the words of his sub-title) "the feasibility of inter-stellar flight". That human technical ingenuity is already upon the very edge of solving the elemental problems of interplanetary travel, seems nowadays to be, if not quite beyond doubt, at least as near to it as makes little difference.

With a whole battery of man-made satellites hurtling forever round the sun, with American Mariners taking actual photographs of Mars and Venus, our two nearest neighbours in space, and rockets metaphorically flying the Russian and American flags making direct hits on the moon, it is surely only a matter of a few years, or a few decades at most before actual physical human contacts are established with at least our closest neighbours in space.

As Rudyard Kipling wrote long ago, before space travel was ever heard of: "The wildest dreams of Clapham are the facts of Katmandu". So too, the then daring pioneer visions of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells are shortly due to be realised. For it is now an odds-on bet that human beings will make a landing on the moon within a decade (where they may well find that "distance lends enchantment" to the poetic Queen of Night) and on Mars and Venus (climate permitting) before the end of this century.

Most serious writers on cosmology, Mr. Strong among them, nowadays subscribe to such elementary propositions. But for him at least, the real problem only begins there: after planets, stars; when once the limits of our planetary system have been reached, what next? For the prospects of man being able to establish any permanent or profitable contacts within our solar system itself, appear to be very remote. For the inner planets are too hot (Mercury and Venus) and the outer planets (Jupiter and beyond), are too cold. Even Mars and the moon do not appear to be precisely designed for human habitation.

However, our solar system is probably one of innumerable solar systems. Can these alien suns ever be

contacted and, if so, will planets viable to man be found encircling them? Taking his own solar system as read—or conquered—can mankind go further? Will a flight to the stars ever be feasible? This is the problem our author sets out to consider with a combination of imaginative speculation and remarkable professional knowledge of actual and possible technical developments in space travel, from the already primitive Russian Sputniks to the giant star-ships that will—he believes—one day glide upon century-long voyages from star to star and from one planetary system to another.

This extremely interesting book combines audacious speculations with the most exact technical data. Its speculations are wide. But they do not go beyond the limits of our galaxy, the famous Milky Way. Intergalactic space is too much even for the most ambitious star-ship!

However, as there are something like 100 million stars (suns) inside our galaxy, a substantial proportion of which probably possess planetary systems of their own, there are plenty of unexplored continents for any future stellar Columbus. No galactic Alexander is ever likely to shed tears at the lack of available worlds to conquer!

Two evident assumptions are clearly cardinal to Mr. Strong's thesis: mankind must be capable one day of reaching the stars, and there must be planets somewhere in space upon which mankind can hope to settle. Mr. Strong answers both questions in the affirmative. Mankind's inventive genius will, he feels sure, eventually design star-ships as superior to the rudimentary space ships of today as, say, the giant ocean-going liners of today are to the archaic galleys with which the ancient Phoenicians first braved the terrors of the Atlantic. A diagram of such a hypothetical star-ship is included in the text.

I must confess that I am totally unable to criticise this highly specialised technical demonstration, but we must surely at least wish *bon voyage* to the first star-ship and to its intrepid crew, bound for our nearest stellar neighbour *Alpha Centauri* (in the Southern Cross) distant about 25 billions of miles. To reach this "close" stellar neighbour of ours, something approaching the speed of light would be necessary; but even such speeds, as our author seeks to demonstrate may eventually become attainable to man-made locomotion. Then all aboard for the Milky Way!

The most important, as well as the most enlightening of the many points discussed in *Flight to the Stars*, concerns the nature and distribution of life throughout the universe. Put briefly Mr. Strong produces considerable cosmological evidence to show not only that many stars besides our sun, possess planets, but that conscious life represents a fairly constant recurring phenomenon: in which connection he gives a detailed (and entirely materialistic) analysis of the cosmological causes of life; a demonstration which incidentally, entirely excludes any need for, or even possibility of, special creation or supernatural intervention. Though Mr. Strong does not directly raise philosophical questions, it seems clear that he (like Laplace in his famous reply to Napoleon) has no need for the theistic hypothesis.

Rather surprisingly, the author includes amongst the protagonists of space flight, no less a person than the Prophet Ezekiel who may have seen a vision of a space ship. We must confess that this is a new one on us! What sort of star-ship was Elijah's "chariot of fire?"

This Believing World

WE THOUGHT we knew most of the fantastic sects Christianity is blessed with, but the *News of the World* (22/8/65) has just unearthed one that is new to us. It calls itself "The Brotherhood Church", and is distinguished by its obstinate refusal to register the birth of children, or to pay fines, tithes, or National Insurance. It is so popular that its members consist now of four adults and three children; but, like Mormonism and Christian Science, the sect can grow.

★

THE SEVEN stalwarts believe in Jesus Christ of course, but reject most of the Old Testament, particularly "the nonsense about Adam and Eve". But as sin came into the world directly from Adam and Eve, and we can only be saved because Jesus died for all of us on the Cross, how can the wondrous and historical story of Adam and Eve be rejected? However, the sect believes in evolution, in spite of the fact that "our Lord" was not an evolutionist. But it regularly preaches the gospel. It's safer to be on the right side!

★

SOME of the Apostles of Jesus remain obscure although every one of them has had a gospel devoted to him and his work. How many ordinary Christians know, for instance, that "doubting" Thomas is recorded as being a "twin" of Jesus? However we were intrigued to read in the London *Evening News* (21/8/65) that, although St. Bartholomew's Day has been celebrated in London for 700 years or so, all we know about him is his name. How did a relatively obscure apostle about whom "nothing for certain" is known become so popular? His "popular favour" eludes a "satisfactory explanation", we are told.

★

THE *Evening News* has however obliged with a splendid explanation. It is that there is something "curiously attractive" in Bartholomew's "very obscurity" for it proves how marvellously well he worked for Jesus with no hope of reward. It is a reminder, the paper says "that much devoted work for Christ and his Church and people goes by unnoticed". This may be true in general, but in the case of St. Bartholomew the truth is simply that, as with all the Blessed Apostles and even Jesus himself, we are dealing with myths or legends. There is no evidence whatever that there was a St. Bartholomew.

★

ONE OF the most extraordinary facts about the sacrament of marriage is that so few people appear to know that a marriage in church is *not* legal unless it is properly registered according to the law of the land. This goes for *all* marriages here, no matter what the religion of the bride and bridegroom. We read for example, that "scores of English girls" who married Arabs in a mosque now know that the "priest" was a retired butcher not registered to perform a marriage (*Sunday Mirror* 22/8/65), and therefore "they are not legally wed". But it is interesting to note that at least one lady appears not particularly worried about that. What does worry her is, "we are not entitled to maternity grants or sickness benefits".

★

THE question whether women should be admitted to Holy Orders can only be authorised by the "Universal Church", declared Canon W. H. Barkwell of Boston, Lincs, in a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* (25/8/65). Orders of the Church of England are not its own, the Canon said, "but those of the whole Church of God as it existed prior to the Reformation". And he viewed the consequences of

two bishops falling in love with each other and subsequently getting married as "too much for any Church to face". "How hideous", he concluded, "is any thought of maternity vestments!"

Reply to an Agnostic

By GONZALO QUIOGUE

(Manila)

IN A LETTER to THE FREETHINKER of May 14th, 1965, captioned "Atheists and Agnostics", Michael R. Evans thought it "a great pity that atheism does not represent a logical point of view for, if it did, we could all be united under its banner."

If this is a valid argument, we can make the same charge against agnosticism or theism. If agnosticism represents a logical point of view, we could all be united under its banner. Mr. Evans's argument unwittingly threatens atheism, agnosticism and theism with total annihilation!

After spending some time as "a true member of the secular world", Mr. Evans had found one element "extremely disappointing", namely "the pathetic rivalry between the Atheists and the Agnostics". I suggest that this criticism of Atheists is making the situation more disappointing and more pathetic. But we must admit his good intention. He wants to enlighten Atheists and Theists. The Churches, he said, "rightly call their following a flock, for the latter are sheep-like in their acceptance of ideas which they cannot evaluate for themselves. Let us not have a flock of Atheists following some dogmatic philosophy which they feel too intelligent to reject."

From time to time some sheep-like Agnostics, who should know better, make a charge that atheism is dogmatic. They are mistaken. In formal and proper argument, only an affirmative proposition can be dogmatic, because such a proposition has the burden of proof. When it is not supported by proof it is dogmatic. So far, theism has not presented any valid proof of God acceptable to science and logic. Atheism cannot be dogmatic, because it represents a negative proposition: there is no God. It is not duty-bound to present proofs like the affirmative one. Atheism is simply denying the claim of the Theist that there is a God. To consider the existence of God in the unknown is to deal with nonsense. We can be sensible and rational only when we express ourselves in terms of and within the realm of present knowledge! The unknown is a flimsy refuge of Agnostics, fence-sitters, shirkers and other comfort-seekers — people who say: "Let George do it. I have more important matters on hand."

When we know that the entity called God was a mere invention of ignorant men in the past, why can't we reject this?

When we know that the principal traits of a so-called God, all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving, cancel one another, why can't we admit that God is just a figment of the imagination? If there is such a "Being" He will end human miseries; for He is all-loving, all-powerful and all-knowing — a "perfect Being".

How can atheism be dogmatic when the non-existence of God is self-evident?

"It is possible some sort of god is lurking in the unknown!" says an Agnostic. Hence he neither affirms nor denies God. His decision shall forever be dangling in the air, because the unknown, like the universe, nature and quantity, is infinite in space-time; although we are continually pushing back the boundaries of the unknown to enlarge our known world.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

Notes and News

WE LEARN with some dismay that as a result of "preliminary soundings" by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and the International Humanist and Ethical Union, "the first formal discussion took place at Utrecht on July 16th" (*The Humanist*, September). The Roman Catholic Secretariat was represented by Professor J. B. Metz of Germany and Dr. L. C. Baas of Holland, and the IHEU by H. J. Blackham of the British Humanist Association, Tolbert H. McCarroll (American Humanist Association) and Professor J. P. van Praag (Dutch Humanist League). The meeting—we are informed—"explored the possibilities of a future international and official contact between the IHEU and the Roman Catholic Church". And another discussion is to take place at the end of the year.

★

WE ARE not in the least surprised that the Secretariat for Unbelievers should have sought this meeting: the Roman Catholic Church has a great deal to gain and nothing to lose by even a temporary ceasefire in its losing battle against freethought. But what can be the motives of the IHEU? It isn't in the position of the Polish Communists, having to govern a largely Catholic population; it isn't even a political party dependant upon the Catholic vote. It is—as we understand it—a propagandist organisation whose humanist philosophy and ethical principles are directly opposed to the theology and moral teaching of Rome. To put the question bluntly, what have Mr. Blackham, Mr. McCarroll and Professor van Praag intellectually in common with men who eat their God in church each Sunday? If—as we assume—the "preliminary soundings" were made by the Catholics, they should have been told quite simply that the respective positions were clear and

irreconcilable and that no amount of "dialogue" could reconcile them.

★

SUCH a reply would not be dogmatic, but merely realistic: a recognition of the dogmatic nature of the Roman Catholic faith, and the reactionary nature of the Roman Catholic Church. It would not rule out co-operation between Humanists and individual Catholics on specific social issues (with Norman St. John Stevas, for instance, on abolition of the death penalty) or political support for a Catholic like Kennedy rather than a Quaker like Nixon.

★

ANOTHER—it seems perpetual—source of astonishment is the naivety of non-religious writers on psychic subjects. *Swan on a Black Sea: A Study in Automatic Writing* (Routledge, 35s.) was described by the *Observer* reviewer Philip Toynbee (22/8/65) as "a very important book indeed and one which should be obligatory reading for all the many of us who cannot yet bring ourselves to believe that human beings experience anything at all after the death of their bodies". Whatever our preconceptions may be, Mr. Toynbee added "these scripts provide something solid and incontrovertible which cannot be explained away with the usual facility of the naturally incredulous. Over to you, Professor Ayer!" Well, we haven't read the book yet, though we've made a note of it. But it doesn't seem necessary to call on the aid of Professor Ayer to show one important—and possibly crucial—weakness in the "solid and incontrovertible" evidence. Marghanita Laski did this admirably in her review in the *New Statesman* (27/8/65).

★

THE book which is introduced by that strong defender of ESP Professor C. D. Broad, recounts how an Irish medium, Geraldine Cummins succeeded on request in receiving nearly 40 scripts from Mrs. Combe-Tennant, herself a medium, who had "passed over" in 1956. Mrs. Combe-Tennant's sons have identified these scripts as undoubtedly emanating from their mother and the editing is, Miss Laski said, "very hot on evidential precautions" but it is "apparently believed that for someone to say in good faith that they have never read or heard something is sufficient proof that they have not . . .". Over to you Mr. Toynbee!

★

OVER we go, in fact, for a final "give-away" quote from Mr. Toynbee's own article. "It is inconceivable", he wrote, that any of these parties could have combined to play a silly and pointless joke on the public". We assure him that it is far from inconceivable to anyone who has studied the history of spiritualism. So much for the solid and incontrovertible!

★

HAVING criticised one use of religion in a road safety campaign (the little girl praying ". . . and keep us safe on the roads"), we readily concede the value of another. In the USA, according to an *Evening Standard* report, you can get a little statue of St. Christopher to put on your car dashboard. At 60 m.p.h. it lights up; at 70 a voice behind it says: "OK brother, you're on your own now". Putting religion to practical purposes, one might say.

★

DESPITE all criticisms—of his vanity, his paternalism towards the native and the primitive conditions at Lambaréné—Albert Schweitzer was a remarkable man, and far from an orthodox Christian. He had always viewed Jesus as limited by the historical conditions of his time, though spiritually gifted. And his "reverence for life" was an essentially humanistic ethical concept.

God on the Doorstep

By PHYLLIS K. GRAHAM

"WHAT would you do", a schoolboy was asked, "if you were alone in the house, and there was a ring at the bell, and when you went to open the door you found God standing on the doorstep?"

The boy hesitated, perplexed and embarrassed, as well he might be. Suddenly his eyes brightened.

"I'd ask him in", he said, cheerfully, civilised grace coming to the rescue, "take him up to the lounge, settle him by the cocktail cabinet and tell him to make himself at home. Then I'd cut down to the hall and 'phone the vicar".

Apocryphal or not (and I don't know which) the titbit has a mellowly Anglican flavour which could hardly be reproduced in any other milieu on earth. It savours so richly, maturely, of a certain tolerant, half respectful, half protective attitude towards a Deity shorn of his terrors and tactfully excused his peculiarities. A figure, in fact, so inextricably part of the Established-Order-of-Things that there is scarcely any incongruity in the idea of his appearing on a doorstep—provided, of course, that his car is at the gate and his card ready to hand, and there is no suspicion of concealed tracts about his suitably attired person.

Curious to think how different the answer might have sounded from another type of mind—or another kind of doorstep. The Visitor would probably have been an entirely other sort of god—which is odder still when you come to think of it.

For instance, one can imagine a Roman Catholic mind gravitating instantly to the Sacrament of Penance: confession before cocktails would be the order of precedence, if indeed the latter came into it at all. A saint might conceivably melt in ecstasy on the doorstep; but I suppose the rank-and-file reaction would be welcome tempered by awe, hurried examination of conscience, a beating of the breast and "Lord I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof . . ." as the Divine Visitor is genuflected in. Of course, Catholics are accustomed to receiving visits from the Lord when the Sacrament is brought to the sick, and this would be the correct procedure, except that the honoured Guest would be conducted to the best parlour instead of the bedroom. But to arrive in a pyx, the priest's responsibility entirely, is obviously a different matter from appearing as an entity, seeking admission under its own steam as it were.

In spite of being tolerably well acquainted with both types, I cannot decide whether the Catholic instinct would be to fly for the priest or, initial awkwardness over, to seize the unique opportunity of a word or two in the Lord's ear without benefit of clergy. Maybe it would depend on temperament, degrees of sanctity or sin, even social status. Of one thing, however, I am certain: the Papal Visitor would present an entirely antithetic front from that displayed by the Gentleman of Canterbury. Or should I say, series of fronts, for both would be adept, in their opposing spheres at protean transformations depending on individual doorsteps. The three-in-one deity, moulder of our split-mind society, manifestly suffers from acute schizophrenia.

A series of recorded encounters with Freethinkers and Humanists would be enlightening—and entertaining! For instance, I can imagine a petulant onslaught from one I know, heard growling over the wheel as he drove home from a match at Sussex University between Mrs. Margaret

Knight and an RC female opponent: "I just can't take all this drivel about virgin births and immaculate conceptions. Why couldn't he have come out of a—*buttercup*?"

I must admit that I should never have connected "him" with anything idyllic. My preoccupation would certainly have been with the schizophrenia, and my first impulse would probably be to ring for the police. Long ago I decided that the boss of the universe, if he existed, must be the supreme example of the type of criminal we incarcerate in Broadmoor. Granted, the more intelligible side of his extraordinary personality displays artistic and mathematical powers of the loftiest order; which makes the problematical reverse all the more sinister, obnoxious and potentially dangerous. So, however benign and accommodating, even appealing, that apparition on my doorstep, I should simply regard him as a nasty piece of work and be on my guard against imminent psychopathic outbursts.

Second thoughts would show that dialling 999 would be futile as well as cowardly, for quite probably the police might be implicated in the lunacy, their job being law and order and the bolstering of public morals—which everyone knows cannot possibly be carried on without the patronage and assistance of the deity. And then, the first recoil of startled nerves over, I should—I hope—seize the opportunity of prodding the patient with a little depth-psychology of my own devising.

To do this in peace and quiet I suppose I should have to ask him in. The kitchenette I think. Its decor of homely normality might provide an antidote of sanity. It is true that as I usher in my Visitor I recall how many, many times in the past I have longed to get him at my mercy and give him the round of the kitchen. But now I am older, wiser, and much more psycho-analytical. I know you have to treat a nut case with kindness, gentle persistence and a great deal of cunning.

Assuming his semi-incognito allows him to take a little earthly refreshment, I should brew tea (my best Lapsang, to make a thorough job of it) and serve it accompanied by delicate dollops of well-placed flattery (*praise*, in scriptural terminology). These prudent attentions should quickly arouse the paranoic urge to divine self-expansion. The atmosphere propitious, my suave and diplomatic inquisition could begin.

But of course I shouldn't bait him with old stuff like Free Will and the Origin of Evil; this would merely irritate him and get us nowhere (which is all they ever have done to anybody). And as for that disreputable dogma of Original Sin, I suspect he's a little ashamed of it nowadays, and would rather not be reminded of the Original Rumpus and his subsequent unchristian revenge on the human race. Besides, what's original about sin? The subject would bore him desperately. (Remembering Jehovah's reactions to divine desperation I suppress an involuntary shudder and steer out to safety).

The best approach, I feel, would be the television interview technique. This would put him at once on the celebrity pedestal—where he would feel at home—and me on the level of deference with a permit for privileged impertinence. We could then dispense with mythology without offence to his sensitivity, and get down to a civilised discussion on modern topics.

Here a minor difficulty has to be settled: the manner of address. "Almighty God" sounds too pompous,

"Heavenly Father" somewhat affected, "Lord" is no good without the prefix "O"—too suggestive of profanity. I compromise on "Your Holiness", which seems to me respectful and stately, and moreover rolls easily—if cynically—off an ex-Papist tongue.

I make sure that his teacup is refilled, and just save myself from a false start . . . "Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin . . ." but remember in time that I am not entertaining Little Jesus. I stiffen to decorum and assume an expression of discreet but intelligent inquiry.

"Your Holiness, you have—ah—enjoyed a position of authority for an—er—unprecedented number of years. You must have seen many changes. If I may ask . . . What are your feelings in regard to the world situation at the present day, as compared with, say, the Aurignacian period and final ice-age, or—to come a little nearer home—the duration of the Thirty Years' War?"

The first reference is unfortunate: anything prior to 4004 BC is bound to be problematical. An ice curtain seems about to fall between us, but is happily dispelled by the second allusion, which sets the war-horse nostrils of the Lord of Hosts twitching with excitement. Delighted, if a trifle dismayed, I realise communication is on, and on with a vengeance. I have hit the jackpot with a leading question.

The ethics of good taste forbid me to report in direct speech the subsequent flow of eloquence from my Interviewee. I can only give here a brief summary, confining myself to the salient points, and tactfully omitting any reference to what must be excused as inevitably characteristic of paranoia in the more exalted stages.

His Holiness, it appears is not averse to a good scrap-up here and there among his creatures, even a free-for-all at decent intervals. In fact, as he reminds me with the faintest bat of an eyelid, the noble art itself was born in Heaven. (I'm sorry about the mythology but it's safer to humour him). Apparently (I gather) what really caused the first rift in the Sempiternal Jelly of Immutable Bliss, wherein he had been encased in supreme and undisturbed solitude from all eternity, was—astounding revelation!—the anticipatory thrill of Captain Lucifer's exploits in the Pan-Angelic War.

"It would seem, then, Your Holiness, that creation was created for the sake of, and for the purpose of—ah—should I say—*conflict*?"

I wish I could convey to the reader the ineffable *compôte* of expressions on the (temporarily unmasked) divine countenance. This is plainly a subject close to his heart (or whatever dynamo keeps divinity running) and a source of ecstatic exultation. It exposes, indeed, a feverish deistic obsession: the universe as a sort of pudding-bowl wherein the ingredients have to be continually mixed, pounded together and beaten up in a painful but purposeful pandemonium. Purposeful—? But does the divine chef have any real intention of making the pudding?

I venture to put this stupendous question—when I can get a word in—without the cloak of metaphor, but delicately. I don't want to provoke the Lord's wrath with indiscreet metaphysics.

Quite the contrary, however—it seems to amuse him. The august visage momentarily congeals in what on a less exalted surface, might almost be taken for a leer. With an air of coy condescension to the homely and vernacular, and a sly hint of mysteries yet to come, he assures me—and here, for this one exception, I permit myself to quote—that "the spoof of the pudding is in the beating".

I feel that he expects me to be astounded and confounded, but of course I am not. Too much dust dims

the shine of originality on *that* statement. We are already too familiar with the pudding-philosophy of the Lord's representatives. We hear it continually expounded in moronic dogmas that make fools of men; we see it implemented in policies that make them worse than jungle beasts. The Great Hoax of Humanity is no news to me. All the same it is the slightest bit unnerving to get confirmation straight from the horse's mouth.

And at this point I feel the old rage boiling dangerously near the surface. In another moment I shall empty what remains in the teapot over that fatuous mask of theocratic self-complacency and sadistic benevolence. I pull myself together with a superhuman effort. For I know that hot anger is as impotent as violent struggle with a bog, when the Object of wrath is nothing but the Muck of Ages . . . the slimy Deposit of uncounted centuries of mental sewage. Intelligence alone can properly survey the Horror. Only science can deal with it.

With forced calm and resolute politeness I prepare to terminate the interview.

"To recapitulate, then Your—Holiness . . . In reference to my opening question, may I conclude from your esteemed remarks that you consider the—ah—immediate aspect of the world situation—er—not greatly different from any facet upturned to your celestial gaze through the ages? In other words—if I may borrow your own charming metaphor—you see the pudding-theme as—how can I put it?—the paste that holds creation in a changeless lump of battered yet unbroken unity? The corporeal manifestation, shall we say, of a Gelatinous Absolute—?"

The answer is wordless and majestic. He has risen, a monolithic Figure blocking out the teacups, an august and awful Presence obliterating every human detail of my homely kitchenette. The words, unspoken, boom around us like a ghostly bombardment . . .

Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper . . .

(The same yesterday today and for ever . . .)

But I am not to be cowed. I remain seated at my table, dispassionate and cold as a minister of justice.

"One last question, Your Holiness, if I may be permitted. In view of your—ah—venerable years, your long-protracted government of the universe, your unspeakable labours for mankind; and taking into account the problems of post-Darwin theology, and the heavy responsibilities of a thermonuclear age . . . have you—ah—considered the possibility—of—er—retirement?"

Do I see exposed at this moment the emotions of venerable Pontiffs who outstay their welcome, and already taste the acrid breath of the Curial vultures who crowd upon them?

I feel almost sorry for the poor wretch in spite of all the mischief due to his madness, for behind the mask of majesty he is very, very sick, and his days are numbered. As he sinks back in his chair in a deflated heap my voice takes on the soothing tones of a mother to an ailing child, and finally the hypnotic cadence of the professional persuader.

With consummate skill I lure his split mind back to the radiance of pre-existence, where all his horrible ideas are still in embryo and safely shut away from reality. Gradually, persistently, I impress on his warring Personalities the images of peace; with subliminal cunning I paint the advantages of Being encased in the Sempiternal Jelly of Immutable Bliss, the calamity of a universe as yet non-existent, and not so much as a puff of hydrogen cloud on the calm horizons of eternity.

And as he sinks deep, deep, deeper in that pre-natal slumber of undisturbed serenity, and ultimately sizzles out like mothwings in flame, I reflect, wistfully, on the

extreme desirability of some asylum beyond the known universe, where the lunatic gods of men could twitter, scheme and rage to an empty twilight. But how long would it take to clear away the last of their secret ammunition from the labyrinthine underworld of the Great Unconscious? Should we ever be truly free of the Shadow on the Threshold?

I make a fresh pot of tea to fortify my spirit, and remind myself how very, very recently man-son-of-ape emerged from the haunted thickets of the jungle. Poor chap, we must give him time—and a chance—to grow out of his ghosts.

And if he ever does—if in some unforeseeable future he steps, clean and free, beneath the lintel of uncluttered humanity—he will find no Shadow darkening his doorstep . . . but who knows what inconceivable reality may be drenching it with light?

CORRESPONDENCE

ORDINATION

Your correspondent, D. F. Harris, in your issue of August 13th, will not be alone in finding it incredible that the secretary of the Thomas Paine Society, while still retaining that office, has recently assumed ordination upon joining the Old Roman Catholic Church. Mr. Morrell is, of course, free to make his own assumptions, and to accept the limitations of his own mentality, but many—and especially many who respect the name and qualities of Thomas Paine—will find it difficult not to regard his defection as an absurdly unedifying *volte face*.

A. J. STATHAM.

THE JESUS MYTH

Let me frankly admit that when I said on page 3 of my book, *Jesus—God, Man or Myth*, that if “there ever was an obscure individual about whom we know literally nothing”, I never

expected that a Christian-priest (THE FREETHINKER 27/8/65) would take this as meaning that I believed there may have been a Son of God performing miracles, going about Palestine “doing good”, crucified, and flying to Heaven without visible means of support. On the contrary indeed. I quoted on page 1, the exact words of Dupuis who “refused to examine” whether there was “a philosopher, or impostor, named Christ”, and as far as words have any meaning, I expressed my *complete unbelief* in an “obscure individual about whom we know literally nothing”. But 170 years ago, Dupuis was faced with the same Christian imbecilities we still have to face. For no self-respecting Christian will agree for a moment that Jesus is as mythical as Krishna or Ra or Wodin. And so we have to go on and on, repeating the same objection to Jesus and Christianity over and over again, with priests vainly trusting that they have answered us, knowing quite well that very few people would refer to this journal of ours. The Rev. C. Strother, FAES, is typical of his brothers in Christ.

H. CUTNER.

NOT SO HOPELESS?

Some of your correspondents, such as Mr. R. Smith and Mr. A. Wright present, it seems, a rather hopeless case re the possible improvement of man's virtues and ethics. It is quite hopeless, obviously, when dependent upon the frailness of mere human scruples and his inept ability with logic or the most reasonable reasoning; when dependent upon his divine absolutes or some of his saintly agents, dictators or philosophers of renown—but maybe it is an adequate authority that is so direly needed.

Even the dumbest of beasts learns from past experiences. If “man is lord of himself” he has proved himself a damned poor teacher of himself, behaviourally, through past experiences. But maybe man's own historical and behavioural records, if properly presented as instruction, can, after all, furnish the most reliable authority for man's ethical conduct. “As ye sow, so shall ye reap.”

“For it is a curious fact, in the conflict between reason and authority, the conflict itself is a victory for reason. Authority is always on the road to defeat when it has to appeal either to force or to reason. It is secure only when it rests upon unquestioned habit”, (*American Inquisitors*, Walter Lippmann).

JOHN H. JONES, (Arkansas, USA).

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In *The Scarlet and the Black*, Stendhal contrasted typical representatives of the two rival ideologies then struggling for the mastery of post-Napoleonic Europe, the Black International and the Red: the Church of Rome, then closely allied with the restored European monarchies, and the radical and anti-clerical movements that stemmed from the French Revolution. He wrote not only—or perhaps even chiefly—as a master of fiction, but also as a social historian.

Today, a century and a half after the era of Napoleon and the Holy Alliance, the current controversy between the Scarlet and the Black, between anti-clerical social revolution and conservative Christianity, dominates the European stage as decisively as it did in the days of Stendhal and his anti-clerical “hero”, Julien Sorel; albeit its manifestations have changed considerably.

For the most powerful radical social movements of today date ostensibly from the Russian and Chinese revolutions, and no longer from the French. And they describe themselves as communist not liberal. On the clerical side also, there have been changes; most notably that the Vatican, which reached perhaps its lowest ebb in influence and in current reputation during the generation after Napoleon (1814-48), is undergoing a new counter-reformation and appears today as by far the most powerful of the Christian Churches.

This counter-reformation inaugurated by that remarkable papal strategist, Pope John XXIII (1958-63), seems destined like its sixteenth-century Jesuit predecessor, to inaugurate far reaching changes in the sociological as well as the theological sphere.

In thus trimming its ecclesiastical sails to meet the impact of the prevailing winds of change, the Vatican is merely continuing its policy of bygone ages. Rome is, after all, the Eternal City, and the Vatican has a collective memory which the proverbial elephant might well envy.

The Evolution of Catholic Sociology

It is rather unfortunate that rationalist criticisms of Rome have, as a rule, concerned themselves with the Vatican as a theological institution, for its sociological evolution has been every whit as remarkable as its religious. In due historical succession, Rome has co-existed with chattel slavery (viz. the Pauline injunction: “Slaves obey your masters”); with feudalism (during the Middle Ages the Church owned at least a third of the land in Europe, and in modern times an equivalent proportion in Latin America); and with capitalism (an article in the March 27th issue of the *Economist* showed Rome to be a financial power in the contemporary world, hardly inferior to Wall Street).

Successively, Rome has owned slaves (in both the Old and New Worlds), feudal real property (i.e. land), and today, capital. And yet we are still told by Protestant Fundamentalists that Rome never changes!

However, even the above list is not quite complete. It omits what is perhaps, from the point of view of modern

sociology, the most original and remarkable (though actually one of the least known) of all clerical experiments, the Jesuit “republic” in what is now Paraguay, which lasted for a century and a half until its suppression by Iberian imperialism in 1768. It evolved a type of economic collectivism without money, without property or individual ownership of any kind, actually a far more thoroughgoing economic communism than anything in present-day

day professing Communist lands. This example, necessarily confined to a primitive social terrain and to a pre-industrial economy, the ruins of which still are to be found scattered throughout the primeval American forest (where they deeply impressed non-Roman travellers

such as Cunninghame-Graham and Julian Duguid) surely affords a convincing precedent, should the Vatican ever come to require one, that Catholicism is not necessarily incompatible with even the most extreme forms of collectivist society.

A Dialogue with Marxism

It would appear that Rome may soon need such precedents; this time in relation with modern Marxist industrial Communism in the collectivist societies which have developed east of the Iron Curtain since 1917. For, according to a recent—August 20th—issue of the *Universe*, “In spite of all the dangers there is a growing feeling in Europe that the Christian-Marxist dialogue has become an historical necessity”.

The writer, Hugh Kay, goes on to give numerous reasons why the Vatican should now abandon the attitude of relentless hostility towards Communism, which has uniformly characterised it ever since the intransigent profascist Pope Pius XI (1922-39), took over from the liberal Benedict XV (1914-22), who had been by no means hostile to the Russian regime in the years immediately following the Russian Revolution. For from the special point of view of Rome, the Orthodox Tsars had always been anti-popes, if not indeed, anti-Christ.

St. Marx?

It would appear that today we are actually upon the eve of a new reorientation of papal policy, not only via the ecumenical movement towards “our separated (Christian) brethren”, but towards the Marxist anti-Christ itself. But what would such a dialogue imply? I do not share the view that the Vatican is ever really likely to go communist, or that the mortal remains of St. Marx are ever likely to be re-interred under the high altar of St. Peter's along with the (supposed) remains of his Jewish fellow proletarian, St. Peter. On the whole I think it more probable that (plain) Karl Marx will remain undisturbed in Highgate Cemetery. And it is unlikely that Rome will ever endorse 100 per cent communism whether of the Marxist or earlier Jesuit type. The Church is too involved in capitalist high finance ever to make such an abrupt economic transition.

What seems much more likely to happen, is that Rome will increasingly adopt a mixed economy like that of the

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

Red and Black

By F. A. RIDLEY

present English Labour Party or the German Social Democracy: a moderate collectivism. The Fabian Society which boasts that it has converted the Labour Party to Socialism, may soon be able to claim an even more exalted convert in the Vatican.

At any rate there does not now appear to be any doubt that the war-to-the-knife era of the pro-fascist papacy of the Piuses is now over, and that in the years ahead we

shall hear a great deal about Christian Socialism, and in which communism will cease to be an ecclesiastical swear word. It will not be a very difficult change for the Vatican to make, particularly since one often tends to forget that Rome is essentially a collectivist body. Historically it was not Rome but the Protestant Reformers (Calvin in particular) who were the ideological forerunners of the capitalist era in modern secular history.

The Psycho-Analysis of Catholicism

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

FRANK ROBERTS'S contribution to *Objections to Roman Catholicism* (Constable 16s.) has not excited so much uproar as that of his ecclesiastical namesake, but it is perhaps not less worthy of attention, though it does not deal with a subject, such as Archbishop Roberts's "Contraception and War", which seems to be in everybody's mind. Frank Roberts's essay "Authoritarianism, Conformity and Guilt" deserves consideration precisely because it can be regarded as a serious—and to that extent, praiseworthy—attempt to examine problems which the serious Catholic is confronted with daily, but too often shelves.

It is in the last page of his essay that Roberts gives his aim, as an attempt "to indicate one or two of the psychological factors that may well have been at work to induce the indifferentist, conformist piety which many Catholics appear to show, and which in the contemporary world seems to be contributing so little to human enlightenment and the Christian redemption of Society".

The Church's insistence on orthodoxy, with authoritarian discipline to enforce it, is strange to the Protestant non-Catholic because his rule of faith is private judgment, and strange to the Freethinkers whose only orthodoxy is fidelity to truth as he discovers it. Granted the Catholic's orthodoxy comes from God, there would be nothing illogical or incongruous in its being maintained by a God-derived authority.

But even granted this were so, it is easier for men to cling to concrete directions, than to give an assent which is the assent of the full adult personality. We are probably all familiar with the Catholic whose education appears to have left him unconcerned for social justice, yet scrupulous not to be five minutes late for mass; capable of making money by practices sharp though short of illegal, yet concerned to donate portions of the same money to the foreign missions. It is unrealistic to deny there are many Catholics seriously concerned with the evils in the body politic which, in the light of their religious faith, they see as a derogation from the Brotherhood of Man which should exist under the Fatherhood of God in whom they believe. Perhaps they might urge, when confronted by the fact that much 19th and 20th century ameliorating came certainly from Protestant, and frequently from secularist quarters that the greater part of men "care for none of these things". But then, Catholics by profession, and Catholicism by its claims, assert themselves as the supreme guides of mankind. It is a sorry outlook to have been limping behind, when they could have been (what Cardinal Newman once said) "a beacon set on a hill for all mankind".

At about six years of age children go through a period of "moral realism". But this is considered as the "age of reason", when they are introduced to the sacraments,

and "prepared in terms of the rules which characterise the pattern of adult religious observance". These numerous rules, mainly external, enter the child's life at the very time when children "tend to see the rules of conduct as having an external validity in their own right".

Roberts suggests that confession, communion and confirmation should be postponed till after the eleventh birthday. He does not mention that this has been long standing Protestant practice. It would have been even more interesting if he had considered it in relation to the past twenty years' experience of this age as a turning point in the educational world—the eleven plus. After eleven, Roberts says, reasoning powers develop, and are brought to bear more sharply on all aspects of life around them.

Roberts discusses further: John Smith commits mortal sin, is then afraid to go to confession at first, but at length self-censure leads him to it. Theological guilt is knowledge that one has transgressed the law of God. In his state there will also be feeling. It can be argued that feeling is unnecessary to theological guilt. Yet a psychopath may know that it is wrong to beat up an old woman, yet not feel any remorse. Feeling gives meaning to the act of self-judgment of which theological guilt consists.

The child copies its parents, with admiration for their qualities and powers which it does not possess. The pattern of the admired good in the parents provides the pattern of integration into society at large. Its parents' its teachers', its priests' evaluations become internalised so that they become part of the process by which the child learns to control its own behaviour in terms of the injunctions and taboos which society has imposed. Roberts goes on to discuss a religious vocation adopted in terms of the Super-ego, or of the Self-ideal.

Having passed these matters under review, he concludes that "a wider place may be found in society for the active Catholic layman". And "if such men and women are going to succeed in carrying conviction in the face of objections to Roman Catholicism, which have some claim to be well-founded psychologically, they must show a spirituality that is not based on a naïve and unthinking orthodoxy nor upon an uncritical acclamation of doctrinal uniformity, nor especially upon a fixation at an infantile level of timid docility, in other words self-preoccupied with apprehension about guilt, rules and conformity, but rather upon an apostolicity which is active, informed and responsible".

These are some astonishing admissions. Those of us who remember years of apologetic and thousands of words written to disprove criticism to these effects directed at the Catholic Church can only remain astonished. Once again, it would appear that even when torn to shreds, Catholicism is to be salvaged at all costs. We prefer to abandon it.

Christianity Did Not Arise in Palestine

By OTTO WOLFGANG

WHEN at the bidding of the late Pope John XXIII the Ecumenical Council omitted from the Good Friday prayer the defamatory phrase *perfidis judaeis* wishful thinking had it that this theological nicety would do away with anti-Semitism. This is nonsense: group hatred is emotional and, therefore, irrational. As there is no remedy for it, it must be legally suppressed—at least in its more virulent forms. There will always be cranks considering such legislation a violation of their freedom of expression, but in civilised lands nobody is free to stigmatise minorities: incitement to violence is an abuse of liberty. Anti-Semitism will survive even if it were proved—and it can, as will be seen—that there never was a man called Jesus and that consequently all the gospel accusations against Jewry fall to the ground as baseless.

Despite the fact that in Christian lands unfettered research along such lines is hampered (mainly through social taboos and the difficulty to spread in word or print ideas that do not conform to Mrs. Grundy's standards), modern scholarship has given a great impetus to the mythologist school—particularly after the publications of the great French Theologian, Alfred Loisy¹—and the adherents of a historical Jesus have to find all sorts of subterfuges (e.g. that the gospel figure is a composite person). They even quote Talmud passages in their desperate search for a persuasive witness to the historical existence of a founder of Christianity.

Now the collection of the material for the Babylonian Talmud did not begin before the composition of the Gospels; that of the Palestinian Talmud even two centuries later; and the process of codification was not begun before the fifth century of our era. There is only one complete copy extant of the Palestinian Talmud, printed in Venice in 1523/4 and kept in Leyden (Holland), and one of the Babylonian Talmud (the Munich Codex) from the 14th century, most copies having been destroyed by Christian fanatics in the Middle Ages. These *autos-da-fé* in turn gave rise to many textual corruptions in order to ward off the accusation of its being a blasphemous book.

There does not, up to now, exist any Talmud edition free from frequent blunders of copyists or from interpolations, Bowdlerisations and misunderstandings. If the Talmud makes mention of Jesus, this is (a) not a contemporary evidence and at best (b) one given under utter duress.

The matter could of course long have been cleared up if the Vatican would agree to let independent scientists see the most carefully guarded copies of ancient manuscripts deposited in its vaults. Soviet scientists have found ways of examining existing sources free of clerical intervention, but language barriers have helped the powers-that-be to keep the results of these studies dark.

In 1958, S. Kovalew published in the *Annual of the Museum of Religious History* an article "Essential Questions regarding the Origin of Christianity" in which he pointed out that the problem of Christ's historical reality is of secondary importance to the Marxist; what matters is (a) what were the social, material and economical conditions that gave rise to the religious ideas expressed in the Christian Church and (b) what are their actual effects today.

In pursuance of this line of research, various monographs were published, e.g. on the Eastern provinces of the

Roman Empire in the first-to-third centuries; the ideology of the working population of Rome; the class contradictions in the cult of Hercules during the second and third; history of the ideologies predominant during the first three centuries of our era; and in particular: *Contributions to the History of Christian Traces in Egypt* (Y. Frantseff) and *Ethical Culture in Ancient Rome and Primitive Christianity* by B. Lapitski (1958). Three years later Yakow Abramovitch Lenzman published his comprehensive analysis of the origin of Christianity.

All these studies show that Christianity was not founded by one person, expounding new ideas, but that these ideas had been engendered by the social conditions of that era, first in little rivulets in various parts of the Mediterranean basin and eventually coalescing—not without clashing against each other—in an Oriental and a European mainstream. In the end the Western ideology—represented by Catholicism—in the wake of European civilisation emerged victorious.

Around zero of our era, the society of chattel slavery had already reached an impasse with no solution in sight. Rebellion against the well organised monolithic structure of the Roman Empire proved futile. The Roman *proles* depended on welfare, but in the colonies the dispossessed masses could only dream of a saviour Lord, even more powerful than the Roman Emperor, lord of the world. Reflecting his image, more and more deities—such as Isis, Mithra and Aesculapius²—took on a near-monotheistic aspect, promising eternal bliss in "another life". The Sect of the Qumran scrolls started with a sort of trinity: a saviour from Aaron, one from Israel, and the Master of Righteousness. This *troika* was reduced to two (still existent in several apocryphal texts such as the Book of Jubilees), and eventually only the Master of Righteousness survived. Primitive Christianity was merely one among several eschatological systems of that era. The point of departure is the Book of Revelation, the oldest part of the canon.

A century ago already the Tübingen circle of F. C. Baur had established that the principal parts of Revelation were written in 68 of our era and that the sequence of the New Testament is an inversion of its chronological origin, with the Gospels as a late second century accretion. Revelation was composed after the destruction of the Temple, and it is remarkable that the New Testament makes no mention of the Jewish War. In Revelation Jesus—partly identified with the mystical Lamb—is a purely cosmic hero existing like Melchisedec (King of Righteousness, Gen. 14, 18) since the beginning of the world. This feverish phantasmagory is sizzling with hatred against the Roman victor who had drowned the national revolution of Bar Kochba (132-136) in blood and imposed on the Jews a special tax for the pagan god Jupiter Capitolinum (to whom the Jewish Temple had been dedicated).

The first pre-Christian nuclei arose in Asia Minor (the "Seven Churches", Rev. 1, 11) and they now went to great length to prove to the Romans that they had nothing to do with the rebellious Jews, but not without violent opposition could Revelation be incorporated into the canon.

There are many passages in the New Testament (e.g. the Gadarene Swine) which show that the writers lived abroad and did not know Palestine from personal experience.

(Continued on page 302)

This Believing World

THERE must be something like ten times more Protestants than Roman Catholics in Britain, and it certainly would prove interesting to hear what they had to say on the ITV programme entitled "Journey with a Purpose" which was all about pilgrimages to "shrines", and certainly one of the finest advertisements for Roman Catholicism ever produced on TV. We were told by enthusiasts that many pilgrimages were being organised on behalf of the "faith". And how fervently religious were the pilgrims, for example, at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walshingham!

★

WE WERE given also pictures of the dignitaries of church and state following Franco in Spain, and told how the pilgrims there numbered millions a year compared with the 20,000 who got to Glastonbury. At Santiago, thousands actually *queue up* to "kiss the Sacred Door of Pardon"; and the writer of the article in *TV Times* (26/8/65) rather pathetically exclaims "Fancy anyone kissing a statue at Glastonbury!" This kissing of objects, or grovelling on one's knees before a cardinal is typical of what used to be called "Popery", and the writer seems to lament that such visible expressions of piety are seen only at pilgrimages to "our Lady".

★

BUT we cannot help remembering Cardinal Heenan's admission that there was a current crisis in the Church. There are not enough priests or, as the *Daily Express* said at that time (June 13th), "The Roman Catholic Church in Britain faces one of the most critical shortages of priests in its history". The estimate now is that there is only "one priest for every 750 Roman Catholics in England and Wales". Dreadful, when one thinks of the many Catholic immigrants to Britain each year.

★

THE Rev. P. Barnes, vicar of Maghull, Lancashire, in trying to woo back some of his parishioners to church, points out that clothes don't make anybody a Christian. He wants them to come, even if they come in their shirt sleeves. The old idea of wearing only one's best "for Christ's sake" appears to have vanished. In the Army everybody not only had to wear his best uniform on church parade, but the severest punishments were meted out to any man who came on unshaven, or even had a button unbuttoned. "Come any old how" is the pathetic cry of most vicars these unbelieving days, "so long as you do come".

★

MRS. Mary Whitehouse of the "Clean-up TV" campaign must either have an extremely efficient public relations officer or some very influential friends—or both. Scarcely a month goes by without a report of her activities appearing in the press. Her latest move is to suggest that the Home Office, and not the BBC should decide whether there should be a public showing of *The War Game* the BBC Television film (*The Guardian*, 7/9/65). Letters to this effect have been sent to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and to the leaders of the Labour and Conservative parties in the House of Lords. We trust that the Home Office will decline to give the "official approval" or disapproval that Mrs. Whitehouse seeks. The BBC—with all its faults—is a responsible body: we don't want to see it controlled by the Government—or Mrs. Whitehouse and her MRA friends.

Women in Church

By KIT MOUAT

I HAD the curious experience last year of "doing" the flowers for the wedding of a Christian Scientist in our local Anglican Church. During the hours I spent on the job, I was reminded of the opportunities such an institution provides for lonely and relatively unoccupied women. Not the sort of women who spend their lives on nothing more demanding than coffee or bridge parties, but those who have a job of some sort, give much of their free time to really useful causes, and yet still have time to spare and a lack of companionship to appease.

One by one, as if regulated by a trades union, they came and turned over the kneeling-pads, polished the brass, tidied up the children's corner, and so on, all amiable and harbouring no animosity towards the atheist in their midst. All small jobs, but duties they performed with satisfaction, knowing that they contributed to the whole effect of the ancient, shining, lovingly-preserved edifice of faith founded on fiction. Single women without men in their lives or with only fathers who would die too late to give their daughters freedom, even in this twentieth century. I had heard one of the not-so-old fathers of one of them bragging in the pub, "Women have to be kept in their place or we'll get the sort of chaos they have in America. I have a charming wife and daughter, but I stand no nonsense . . .". Goodness, I thought, it sounds like Victorian England; do families really still exist where there is only one pair of trousers symbolic of authority, and those worn by the god made in the image of the stockbroker? Evidently. And I imagined the wife and the daughter at home smiling to one another as some women do who know that they, in fact, run the family and who believe that men are children and must be allowed to play King of the Castle.

How silly it all is, and yet what good material for the churches to encourage and to play on. Men make up the prayers and women kneel at their feet saying them, not understanding very much or caring. The men are proud that they have authority to lay down the divine laws, and the women, mumbling in response, believe that all the necessary thinking has been done by those who (they have been told so often) do it best. "As it is now and ever shall be . . .". Polish the brass, bow the head and prepare for the do-it-yourself brainwashing of prayer to the Father-God who lives on and from whom few women believe they can escape.

If the fight for the Rights of Women had been as energetic as that for the Rights of Man, women might not still be turning to the churches for relief from the sort of men who "stand no nonsense". At least in church they don't have to clean the whole place every day. Just half-a-dozen vases once a week, and no one messes up the aisle as they mess up the kitchen floor every few minutes. And in church even their sexual frustration will be glorified. They will not be so conscious of experience they will now never have, or long for but dare not admit. Sex, like thought and doubt and investigation, has been tidied up with a duster and shaken hard out of the heavy, impenetrable door that will close on the congregation and silence all the noise and temptations of the world.

Men who point accusingly at the women who go to church should look first at their own responsibility for the situation. It is men who have made the Christian

(Concluded on page 304)

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

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OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

Birmingham Branch NSS (Midland Institute, Paradise Street), Sunday, September 19th, 6.45 p.m.: Dr. K. JONES, "Witchcraft".

Notes and News

PERHAPS the most telling comment on the tragic conflict between India and Pakistan was that of the cartoonist Papas in the *Guardian* (7/9/65). An undernourished mother and child representing "India and Pakistan's starving millions" were watching the aircraft overhead and remarking: "Suddenly we're rich enough to go to war".

★

THE latest Humanist to panygerise Teilhard de Chardin, is Dr. John Lewis, in a lecture to South Place Ethical Society, summarised in the September issue of the *Ethical Record*. Teilhard—Dr. Lewis informed his listeners—stood in the front rank of contemporary French scientists. "Unfortunately, his views on the evolution of man and his philosophy of progress seemed to his ecclesiastical superiors to be inconsistent with Catholic theology". But, Dr. Lewis continued, it is not quite fair to denounce the Church for forbidding Teilhard to teach or to publish his views: these went "far beyond the ordinary evolutionary conceptions of modern biologists, which are no longer condemned by the Church . . .". Certainly Teilhard's mystical flights carried him beyond normal biological bounds—though Sir Julian Huxley has also made a few sorties into the "noosphere"—but they represent no intellectual advance. And, while the Church may no longer loudly condemn "ordinary evolutionary conceptions", this doesn't mean that it accepts them.

★

THE Church of Rome has never, for instance, accepted the evolutionary view of man in its entirety. Catholics may believe that man's body has evolved, but not his soul.

A place must be found somewhere for God. Teilhard, too, had to imbue evolution with a divine purpose. And even Dr. Lewis finds some of the Jesuit's speculations too unscientific to be justified. "But in the rest of what he has to tell us of the higher development of man I am", Dr. Lewis said, "in entire agreement". And he saw, in Teilhard's belief in progress, "a veritable philosophy for modern man. And indeed he needs one". Teilhard's "new philosophy of man", Dr. Lewis concluded, "makes an important contribution to a new synthesis and a revival of humanist faith".

★

WHY Humanists should be so anxious to express agreement with a Roman Catholic priest—albeit an unorthodox one—we don't know. Teilhard de Chardin was, by all accounts a likable and sincere man. No one doubts that he had considerable ability, but this did not prevent him from writing a great deal of rubbish. There is no "covering" of the earth, no "envelope of living organisms" that he called the "biosphere", there is no "noosphere" above it. These are unscientific hypostatizations, yet Dr. Lewis accepts them without demur.

★

IN BRITAIN, as *New Society* remarked (5/8/65) apropos the merger of Stonyhurst and Beaumont, the teaching strain on the Jesuits has been considerable. They run colleges at Glasgow, Liverpool, Leeds, London, Preston, Stonyhurst, Spinkhill and Wimbledon—some of which have preparatory schools attached to them. At Osterley there is an order for late vocations; in Pimlico a college training Africans, and in Oxford there is Campion Hall. Heythrop Hall has been steadily expanding, and the Society also has missions in Rhodesia and British Guiana. It also runs at least 15 parishes in this country.

★

IN a reminiscent article in the *New Statesman* (3/9/65), Desmond MacNamara mourned the passing of what he called the ragged trousered philosophers, "those self-taught artisans and mechanics who bloomed exotically when Labour was a sturdy sapling, 60 years ago". He knew half a dozen of such men in Dublin when he was a boy, and he was an affectionate disciple, "though sometimes irreverent after the manner of youth". The heroes of their youth were men like Darwin, Carlyle, Bradlaugh, Morris, Kropotkin, Marx and Engels, and they sang libertarian songs. Literary tastes included Maria Edgeworth, Carleton, Dickens, Disraeli, Pater, Ruskin, Anatole France, Balzac, Morris and Wilde, and there was always a neat row of Thinker's Library volumes on the top shelf. And *Twelve Years in a Monastery* (Mr. MacNamara mistakenly writes "Twenty") "was necessary reading in a Catholic country".

★

THE ragged trousered philosophers seem as remote now to Mr. MacNamara as the Winstanleyites or the Albigenians. And, while mourning their passing, he dutifully applauded the reasons. "Their day is finished now", he concluded, "although I am sure that societies without streamed popular education still produce them . . . But the ragged trousered philosopher is dead. The narrow precisions of modern philosophy would not suit him anyway, since he was very much an idealistic system-builder".

★

MENTION of Charles Bradlaugh reminds us that Professor Walter L. Arnstein's study of *The Bradlaugh Case* has now been published by the Oxford University Press at 50s. And without wishing to prejudice F. A. Ridley's forthcoming review, we wholeheartedly recommend the work to our readers.

Christianity Did Not Arise in Palestine

(Continued from page 299)

Their claim to Palestinian origin is just as unfounded as Virgil's who made his Romans descendants of Trojan fugitives.

Lenzman (a French edition of his book has recently been published in Moscow) expressly affirms:

No religious system was primarily invented by a "founder", nor has it been the result of divine revelation; all religions are the traceable results of certain historical conditions existing at that particular period in a particular territory from which particular preconditions facilitated their spread. In competition against rival systems they adopt from them what boosts their proselytising efficacy. Christianity is no exception; its similarity with other creeds, its plagiarism from older current cults tend to underline its natural origin. All Christian dogmas can easily be derived from the socio-historical background of the time of their inception; and from then onwards these ideologies and dogmas have developed together and in conformity with the trends of material conditions in Western society.

When in the Archaemenian period (sixth to fourth century before our era) the captive Jews were allowed to return, only a core of patriotic stalwarts did so; the others settled where they were or emigrated and formed colonies of traders, such as in Elephantine, a Nilotic island in Egypt and in the Hellenic era, in Alexandria. All over Asia Minor freed prisoners settled in the great trading centres as artisans and tradesmen. In the first century of our era the number of Jews living abroad surpassed that of the Jews in Palestine by far. Says our author:

... Ptolemy I exiled to Alexandria a great number of Palestinian Jews following his conquest. Another 100,000 he may have sent to Cyrenaika, and other conquerors most probably did likewise. Considerable masses of Jewish prisoners were anyway forced to emigrate as a result of the Roman conquest, some went to Rome but most remained in the central basin of the Mediterranean . . . All this created a Diaspora, the existence of Jewish communities outside Judaea . . . Historians have calculated that in the first century of our era, when the Roman Empire had a population of 4 to 4½ million Jews, there were only up to 700 left in Palestine.

Western scholars have reached similar results. The *Encyclopedia Biblica* estimates that three or four million Jews were living in the diaspora. (See also Ch.-Guignebert; *Le monde Juif vers le temps de Jesus*, Paris, 1950). In Alexandria the Jews represented about 40 per cent of the population, with more than a million in the whole of Egypt and some ten thousand in Rome. Life in the midst of the antique civilisation brought about new aspects, and it is just amongst these Romanised and Hellenised Jews that reformatory trends arose which in the course of time developed into the new religion.

The Dead Sea scrolls appear to represent the "missing link". In No. 858 of *Bulletin du Cercle Ernest Renan* (Paris, December 1961) André Ragot analyses the many close affinities between terms and passages in Essenic and Christian writings.³

Philon declares that they inhabited not only towns but even small hamlets, and Josephus mentions their "colonies in every old township from whence they spread into the countryside". In particular, M. Ragot writes:

There was a settlement of Essenes in Alexandria; Acts (14, 1) mentions a "Synagogue of the Jews" in Iconium, and this pleonasm gives cause to suspect that abroad (as possibly even at home) there were already Jews who no longer adhered to the strict law. However much Acts and the Gospels have been revised, they no doubt represent a state of far advanced Christianisation as existed in the second half of the 2nd century.

The antique writers of the second century still regarded Christianity as a Jewish sect. Why and how did the seces-

sion take place? To quote Lenzman again:

The Jewish and Christian theologians declare it was because the Jews were monotheists, worshipping one god only, that they played such an important role in the shaping of Christianity; this in their opinion decided the eventual diffusion and victory of Christianity over all other religions of Heathendom. However, this is not true and indeed far from reality. If Judaism engendered Christianity, it was not because of Jewish monotheism (which existed only spasmodically) but because of the political situation and social conditions in general that prevailed in the Oriental parts of the Roman Empire during the first century.

It must be stressed that at this period all other religions manifested similar trends. The religio-philosophical system of, say, Seneca, is no less monotheistic than Judaism. The extended functions of Isis, the Egyptian goddess—of Mithra, the Mazdean god, and even ancient Roman deities such as Tellus show that in the religious reflection of the time one Emperor has his monotheistic counterpart in heaven.

The affinities between the ideas of Seneca and those attributed to St. Paul are so manifest that the first Christian writers claimed him one of theirs, besides Heraclitus and Socrates; and although Seneca had no knowledge of a person called Jesus, St. Jerome (4-5th century) has it that Seneca and Paul exchanged their ideas in a lively correspondence.

The Epistles—messages sent to the community nuclei in order to keep the messianic hopes alive and combat growing currents of doubt and heresy—mark the development of a novel dogma, a change in the social structure of the communities with increasing opposition to Judaism (which had fallen foul of the Roman authorities). Revelation had preached hatred against Rome and asserted that only the members of the twelve tribes of Israel were eligible for salvation. After the suppression of Bar Kochba's insurrection in Judaea the early Christians wanted to demonstrate their loyalty as Roman citizens and enemies of the Jews (Rom. 13, 1-5). They had become "respectable", when they decreed that "every person must submit to the supreme authorities. There is no authority but by the act of God and the existing authorities; are instituted by him: consequently, anyone who rebels against authority is resisting a divine institution . . ."

After this volte-face Christianity was eligible to become the state religion. Not Mithraism (one emperor converted to Mithra lost his life in Asia Minor in battle), not Judaism or Essenism which demanded too much (e.g. meticulous observation of the Law, the rite of circumcision) or the pantheistic mystery religions. The Epistles do away with all this cumbersome ritual (Cf. Rom. 2, 13, 26; I. Cor. 7, 19; 5, 1-2, 16) and contradict the restriction of the elect in Rev. 9, 6 (Rom. 9, 6 and 10, 12). Circumcision becomes a figure of speech and he who believes in Christ is already eligible for salvation. In this connection, says Lenzman:

the most important aspect is the evolution of the Jesus image in the first epistles. In Revelation Jesus the Lamb is merely the Son of God, a chief of "celestial" armies, devoid of any human traits. The first epistles endow him already with some human qualities, yet they stress his basically divine nature, and the portrayal is still far from the gospel narrative of the pretended founder of Christianity. In these oldest epistles there is no mention of his birth in Palestine, or the content of his sermons and parables; apart from saying he was "born of a woman, under the Law" (Gal. 4, 4), he "died for our sins . . . and was resurrected on the third day" (I. Cor. 15, 3-7) there is not much about his terrestrial existence. This silence cannot be fortuitous since the epistles begin and end with wishing everybody Grace and Peace in his name, and they are devoted to teaching Christ. This seems to show that they preceded the composition of the gospels.⁴

In the second half of the second century, seeing that the messianic hopes remained unfulfilled, it became necessary to compose the gospels of which there existed several

hundreds of versions. Every locality had its own literature. Says our author:

... the canonic gospels constitute a mere fraction of the numerous narrations pretending to tell the life story of Jesus; such biographical novels had been very popular among the first Christian communities. More numerous were the gospel stories which were barred from inclusion in the canon, each telling in a special way the wanderings and teachings of the alleged founder of Christianity. Not one was a witness report, all and sundry being composed a century after the events they purport to describe... Besides, their aim had not been to give posterity a true report of real happenings: these were religious writings, devotional compositions to be listened to by the faithful. He who wants to collect historical facts from canonical books with a view to reconstructing the history of primitive Christianity, must first of all establish the date of his sources.

First among the Christian apologists comes Justin (c. 50); all he knew was the nomination of apostles, and some very short and concise aphorisms ascribed to Jesus. But he already mentions Revelation and sees the Messiah in the light of the Old Testament. His pupil, Tatian, considers the Old Testament far superior to all Greek writings, even Plato included. He condemned marriage, the eating of flesh and drinking of wine like the "Nazarites". Jesus was like Samson a *Nazarite ex utero*: "for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb" (Judges 13, 5). From this arose the mistake: Jesus of Nazareth—a locality unknown before the fourth century of our era.⁵

Athanagoras, another pupil of Justin's flourishing around 180, wrote treatises to prove that the Christians were loyal subjects of the Roman Emperor, defending them against the libel incest, atheism and ritual slaughter of the newborn. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons and the most important author of second-century Christianity, compiled the first history of the Church; he is the first to mention the gospels.

It is common knowledge that the gospels contradict each other; moreover, they betray in places an appalling ignorance of the country they purport to describe. These howlers and fantasies (e.g. the mustard tree Mat. 13, 32) were already ridiculed in antiquity (e.g. by Porphyrius). Their description of Palestine's topography sometimes recalls Shakespeare's seashore in Bohemia. But most revealing is the complete lack of any hint of what the Christians did during the Bar Kochba rebellion and the fall of Jerusalem which, if they were there, must in some way or other have affected them too.

Already a century ago Albert Kalthoff, a German pastor of the Lutheran Church (*The Rise of Christianity*, English translation by Joseph McCabe) evolved the theory that the new doctrine could only have originated in Rome, where the preconditions for this religious syncretism existed. Philon, the Hellenised Jew—"the Father of Christianity"—who gave the scriptures an allegorical interpretation already introduced the "Logos" of the fourth gospel. Religious intolerance of an all-powerful theocracy could never have allowed a heresy to develop inside Palestine, let alone a new religion.

NB:—With, so far, no English translations available, all quotations in the text are in the present writer's own rendering.

In 1908 he was excommunicated. F. Heiler, his biographer, wrote: "... Research to find the real truth has not only been blocked by the Roman Church but by all the Christian sects with hardly any exception"

Or Greek Asklepios. It cannot be stressed too much that a life nothing is static, not even the character of gods. The achievements of different civilisations (ideas, methods, inventions) were continuously exchanged, not always in a peaceful way; consequently mythologies too were in flux and imported deities were equated with indigenous ones whose names bore an accidental similarity.

Osiris, the Old Egyptian saviour, was originally a god of agriculture. A more sophisticated period found that the seed had to

"die" and only then was resurrected; in consequence, Osiris became the God of the Netherworld and (after the 12th dynasty) the saviour who by means of his key-shaped cross (an X) resurrects the dead. Set, his adversary, entered Egypt as a rain god, but since there was not much rain, he took over the "ministry" of the cruel desert sun.

Old Persian gods were not always "dualistic": in the ancient Gathas they were material agencies; only in the time of the Pahlavi Bundahish did they become spiritual principles of good and evil. Gods change together with the social conditions which they have to mirror. The Medieval Church, with its strongly defined guild of Saints, Angels, Archangels etc, reflected a certain type of society at a certain stage and changed as soon as this stage was superceded.

The long-standing competition between Christianity and Mithraism was not merely decided by foul play and political intrigue. Mithraism was an old-established oriental cult when the Christ creed was still fluid and in fermentation; the latter was therefore in a better position not only to plagiarise but also to temporise. This opportunistic stage ended only in 325 when the Council of Nicaea gave Christianity its first rigid structure. Later on, Catholicism developed as a mainly European creed.

3. For instance "ecclesia"—assembly, which existed amongst the Essenes but makes no sense for the followers of an itinerant preacher. They also had an Inspector of all camps, *Hebr. mebaqqer*, which is Greek *episcopos*.

As to the class divisions existing amongst the Jews at that time, Lenzman gives the following analysis: the Sadducees (*zaddiqim*), the upper stratum of the priestly caste, observed the law but representing, at the same time, the intellectual elite, they discouraged a too literal interpretation of the texts; they were ready to come to some understanding with Hellenic culture and Roman law. Their counterparts were the Pharisees (*Perushim*), observing the letter of the law, intransigent and self-righteous as rigid bigots, stigmatising any tendency of compromising, with particular influence upon women. They were the rich whose wealth was threatened by the occupying foreign power. Less influential were the Zealots and the Essenes.

The Zealots could be regarded as the extreme left wing. According to Flavius Josephus (*Ant.* 18, 1, 6) they recognised only one master, Jahve; they considered the Pharisees too inactive and, relying on divine assistance, incited to insurrection against the Romans, preaching that the rich and powerful are always hand in glove. Quite frequently they murdered rich people, hence their epithet: Sikkeres, from latin *sica*=dagger.

4. With the progress of science, the process of humanising gods is quite natural. It can be shown that, to mention scriptural figures, David and Jacob had been worshipped as gods: their names can be traced back as theophorous components long before the first appearance of Israel. Abram (later extended to Abraham) had been the epithet of the Mesopotamian Moon-god. Isaac was a fertility god of old (Gen. 26, 12 pp), whose past in the form of a nature spirit like Pan is hinted at in Gen. 31, 53.

5. In Hebrew-Aramaic characters, Nazareth is always spelt with *tsade*. A prophecy in Is. 11, 1 runs: There shall come forth a rod (*nêtsar*) out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Cf. Gen. 49, 22). The word that has to be fulfilled is the prophecy that the Messiah will be a *nêtsar* (shoot, sprout, scion, descendant) out of the stem of David, son of Jesse (Mat. 1, 6). At the same time, his is a branch from the root of Joseph, duplicated in the New Testament genealogy as the "husband" of Mary (Mat. 1, 16). There also was a pre-Christian sect of Nazarenes classed by Epiphanius (*Penarion* 28, 7, and *Haer.* 24) heretic because of their Judaising activities. (In Arabic "Nazarenes" means Christians, as already recorded in Acts 24, 5). F. C. Burkitt "Syriac Forms of New Testament Names" in *Proc. Brit. Acad.* 1911/3, p. 382) makes the point that *zeta*, the Greek letter in Nazareth, is rarely the equivalent of *tsade*; therefore *Nazôraios* could not mean a native of Nazareth, but must be used for *Nazir*, a "devotee" having taken the Nazarite vow.

THE PRIEST IN GREECE

He has no audit on his fear
and sews his priestly gear
with passion's pockets
to astonish Athens
Although his prickling fingers warn him
something wicked this way comes—
to start perhaps a rascal's rising—
each night he lights a daybreak lantern
within the hollow of his skull
and gives to any unemployed
the tools for the job.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

WOMEN IN CHURCH

(Continued from page 300)

religion, and there have, I am proud to say, been few women theologians. Men constantly manage to think up some new excuse for propping up a crumbling faith from Luther to Dr. Robinson, and until men themselves become mature and treat women as human beings, they will find women turing to the churches or smiling at them behind their backs. It is a mixture of immaturity and misery. Sexual cold-war instead of co-existence. If men had spent as much energy on trying to understand humanity as they have on theology, women would perhaps be able to turn to them instead of to the curate or the vicar for love that is at the same time disappointingly theoretical and comfortable and irresponsibly safe. But of course it really isn't only women who are keeping the Churches going. Men looking for authority they have lost in the home from being unable to share it, turn to the Church Councils and are busy with the less menial tasks of finance. The loneliness of human beings is just too great and perhaps it is this that must concern Secularists even more than the faith, for both may well disappear together if considered as inter-dependent. As it is, the foggy and fuddled faith serves to hide the wounds of relationships, but cannot deal with the causes, nor do more than dull the pain. Inasmuch as the Churches are dealing only with the symptoms and hiding and neglecting the diagnosis and prevention, they are doing terrible harm; but Secularists will not themselves do better merely by removing the only poultice that is available for many people.

Isn't this where much of the misunderstanding between Humanist and Secularist lies? The Freethinker-Secularist knows that we cannot afford to stop attacking the Churches; we must continually challenge the old stories that are still being told and believed, and he accuses the Humanist of trying to rebuild before he has removed the rotten wood. The Humanist knows that the Churches, for all their obstruction, destruction, and dishonesty, serve many people well, and believes that first there must be a substitute for that service. And when the Humanist actually wants to co-operate with Christians who cannot even recognise that the rot exists—then the fat is in the fire. This fire is probably the most difficult to deal with, but otherwise, surely, there is no real conflict? We need and must have both the "Secularist" and the "Humanist" attitude, and people prepared to get on with both jobs.

In the meantime there are women now putting on their hats to go down to the church to turn the kneeling pads over or from end to end. If there has to be a father-figure then at least God doesn't need feeding; there is a welcome contrast in the aisle from the kitchen sink.

As for me, I was satisfied with what I had done and I had cleared up the rubbish and puddles and put away the watering cans. The scent of the chrysanthemums was sour and exhilarating and the flowers shone in the evening sunlight, white and green against the ancient stonework, but I had had enough. The stifling peace of it all, the exchange of pleasantries in the house of a god for whom I had no respect and the sterility of perfection, had become unbearable and clung to my throat like the pelt of a murdered animal. . . . I was glad to get back to ordinary family disagreements, the dirt that hadn't been pushed under the mat and a couple of men who know how to share.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Secular Society was held at 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1., on August 18th, 1965. Present: Mrs. E. Venton who was in the Chair, Messrs. Barker, Collins, Condon, Ebury, Kuebart, Leslie, Millar, Miller, Shannon, Sproule, Mrs. Collins, Mrs. McIlroy, Mr. Griffiths (Treasurer), and Mr. McIlroy (Secretary). Apologies were received from Messrs. Amphlett, Micklewright and Warner.

It was agreed that the Committee of the Thomas Paine Society should be allowed the use of the library for a meeting on October 5th. A protest has been sent to the Minister of Health regarding the rejection of a prospective student nurse because she had no religious beliefs. Congratulations were expressed to Mr. G. A. Woodcock whose activities in Manchester were the subject of a recent article in the *Guardian*.

The meeting was informed that the protest against a grant by the London Borough of Havering Council to the Christian Education Movement had been widely reported. Letters had been sent to the Ministers concerned and to the Town Clerk of Havering. The next meeting was arranged for Wednesday, September 29th.

W. J. McI.

PAPERBACKS
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SCIENCE FICTION

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The Freethinker

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For some time past, a controversy has been in progress in these columns respecting the origins of Christianity in general and in particular, the historicity of Jesus Christ. In the course of this argument, widely divergent opinions have been expressed ranging from those of Paul Winter who gave a quasi-orthodox interpretation of Christian origins (even accepting the substantial authenticity of such nowadays generally suspect witnesses as Josephus and Tacitus), to Herbert Cutner, that still intransigent champion of the mythicist interpretation of Christian origins. All these erudite protagonists at least agreed that the Jesus of history was not a god but a man—or a myth; but with this exception, there was hardly a single point upon which they agreed.

It would surely be interesting and instructive if their views were issued in a collective symposium with a preface by, say, Archbishop Roberts SJ, or Bishop Robinson of Woolwich (and *Honest to God*).

A Third View

In perhaps rashly venturing to gatecrash this complex controversy, the writer of these lines does so under the pseudonym of the "rejoicing third". This point of view may perhaps be described as the collectivist interpretation of Christian origins. As and when viewed from this point of view, the whole question of Christian origins appears in a somewhat different light from the more conventional interpretations, a difference that applies especially to the highly controversial problem of the historicity and ultimate historical importance of the titular founder, Jesus Christ himself.

For it would surely appear that here as elsewhere, extremes meet. The supreme importance ascribed to the individual Jesus by the historicists appears to be exactly duplicated by the mythicists. My colleague, Mr. Cutner, for example, whilst he completely and consistently rejects the historical existence of any gospel Jesus, yet persistently appears to treat the problem of the existence (or non-existence) of an individual named Jesus in the Palestine of the first century as the primary and fundamental problem of Christian origins and (quite logically from such a point of view) keeps returning to it again and again.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Accordingly, both orthodox and mythicist scholars, however sharply opposed they may be with regard to their precise conclusions, both agree that the critical problem of an individual Jesus constitutes the primary problem for the critical student of Christian origins.

From what we have termed the collectivist interpretation of Christian origins, the above point of view, fundamental to both the historicist and the mythicist schools of thought is, if not entirely irrelevant, at least of quite minor importance. For primitive Christianity was not, in point of fact, the creation either wholly or even in any significant degree of any one individual religious teacher, whether posthumously designated as Jesus, Paul, John

the Baptist or anyone else mentioned between the covers of the New Testament. That it was the end-product of a collective religious tradition dating back for several centuries may now be regarded as certain. So much so in fact, that the whole traditional individualist assessment of Christian origins may, nowadays be regarded as a scientifically discarded phase of the problem.

The epoch-making discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls,

contemporary with Christian origins, have proved empirically that the thesis put forward half a century ago by such pioneers of the collectivist interpretation of Christianity as Karl Kautsky and Albert Kalthoff, is true beyond question. For the Scrolls, whatever their

authorship and precise context, at least prove beyond any room for doubt, that all the leading ideas of primitive Christianity, the Messiah, his martyrdom and resurrection, even his church upon earth, were all in being in Palestine before Christianity as such, had ever been heard of; all that was left for the Christian Messiah to do, was to baptise this collective creation of a Jewish Gnostic messianic cult in the name of Jesus.

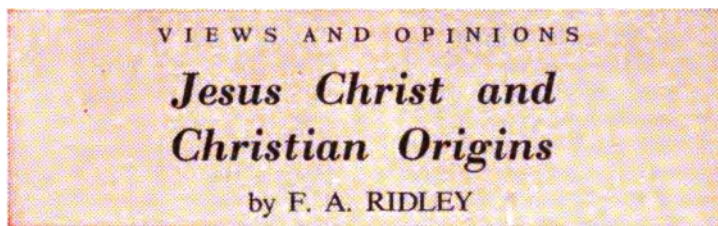
It surely follows clearly from such a context that, even assuming that there actually was a Jesus of history his actual historical role can only have been quite a minor one, and in no way fundamental to Christian origins, as both Mr. Winter and Mr. Cutner (not to mention the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury), agree in supposing.

For the Dead Sea Scrolls have provided the brilliant pioneer speculations of Kautsky and Kalthoff with unanswerable documentary proofs. Primitive Christianity represented an authentic creation of the Jewish messianic tradition which had already produced such kindred phenomena as the Essenes (with their Dead Sea Scrolls), John and his primitive Baptists etc. Early Christianity was in no sense the original creation of an individual Jesus, the historical existence of whom becomes in consequence quite a minor problem.

Was There a Jesus of History?

The actual historically-conditioned question: was there any Jesus of history? is clearly itself one of unusual complexity; a fact made conspicuously evident by the extensive literature devoted to this intriguing theme. In view of the almost total failure of so many experts (sic) to reach any agreed conclusions, we may perhaps suggest that no definite conclusion is now likely to be reached upon this question until perhaps some new Dead Sea Scroll may be unearthed in a specifically Christian context. As matters stand at present, it would appear to be unlikely that there ever was a Jesus Christ, a recognisably human prototype of the Jesus of the Gospels; for had such a prodigy existed, the surviving traditions about him would surely be more precise and less obviously contradictory than they are.

However that may be it would be rash to dismiss the Gospel narratives as being *completely* fictitious; for some at least of the sayings and doings which they record display signs of contemporary authenticity, though perhaps



not always referring to the same person. Both Pilate and John the Baptist were, for example, historical characters explicitly vouched for by their near contemporary, Josephus. (If Origen was correct in stating that this Jewish historian "did not believe in Christ", he must surely have said so somewhere. In particular, there does not appear to be any doubt that one, at least, of the sources of what later became Christianity was a messianic insurrection, the leader of which was crucified by Pilate; for there was no

reason at all why a Christian Church seeking to establish itself at Rome (as the Church was at the time the Gospels were finally edited) should have invented this scandalous story, and many why it should not have done so. Probably then, the unknown crucified Messiah is the nearest we can get to the Jesus of history. In any case, we repeat, whoever the Jesus of history was, he was far more the result than the effective cause of both history and Christianity.

Egypt, Jesus and the Myth Theory

By H. CUTNER

WHILE it is always a good thing that THE FREETHINKER should carry articles like G. R. Goodman's "Easter" on May 7th, 1965, it is well that he should give us his sources. In addition, it might have been even necessary to point out that "Easter" is not exactly Jewish or Egyptian.

Easter is, as most of us know, the name of the Spring Festival dedicated to the goddess Eostra, whose cult emerged among the West-Germanic tribes, and came with them when England was invaded by the Saxons (I believe, however, that these Saxons appear never to have mentioned her). As the Jewish Passover, and the resurrection of Jesus took place about the same time, it is not surprising that the name "Easter" gradually displaced the Biblical terms. What Christians have never been able to reconcile with the awful death of Jesus is the way Easter is always so joyously celebrated. The people do not mournfully eat their Easter eggs or even their hot cross buns.

Mr. Goodman tells us that not only were there three "court trials" of Jesus, but, "the story was 2,000 years old before the alleged events in Judaea"—in fact, "Egypt had already this dramatic play enacted, portraying the Sungod's disappearance at the autumnal equinox, and his return at the vernal equinox". I find this very interesting, but where can I find the references? I am sure that the Sungod's adventures were enacted at one time or another in dramatic form, but I have never been able to find out the precious details. Who says that at 2000 BC it all happened and how is the date computed? Where, moreover, can I find the names Anup and Aan as those of the two crucified thieves?

If Egypt really had "long known a Jesus" called Iusa, I must confess I have never seen any reference to him, in spite of extensive reading about the numerous gods Egypt lays claim to. Would Mr. Goodman give us his authority about this god? If he had "an immaculate parenthood" (whatever this means, for I do not know), was "circumcised, baptised, tempted, glorified on the mount, persecuted, arrested, tried, condemned, crucified, resurrected, and elevated to heaven", it appears strange that John M. Robertson, who wrote so extensively on Jesus as a myth, never mentions him. Nor is the name to be found in the massive *Century Encyclopedia of Names*.

We are told that "Egypt had listened to a sermon on the mount and the sayings of Iusa for ages". Where is this said? Mr. Goodman even magnifies the Egyptian Messiah (by the way whose "Messiah" was he?) and tells us that there are "180 items of identity, similarity and correspondence in word, deed and function with his later copy". Where can I find these marks of identity?

I note that Mr. Goodman refers to the 16 "crucified Christs" which Kersey Graves has made the subject of his

most informative work, *Sixteen Crucified Saviours*, but Graves never mentions Iusa. Why?

In the meantime, I hope R. Smith who, in general, writes such interesting letters will forgive me for not having been before able to deal with the one on Jesus in THE FREETHINKER for May 28th. He is quite right in maintaining that Sir James Frazer did not, in *The Golden Bough*, accept the non-historicity of Jesus. The first edition of this masterpiece was published in 1890, but it is well to remember that even great anthropologists can change their minds in the course of time. There is no doubt whatever that Frazer believed in an historical Jesus, and it would not be difficult to explain why. For him, the gods of the many "native" tribes he wrote about so learnedly were obviously myths; he was more likely to accept the gods of cultured white people as having lived, if not as gods, at least as men. It was just as simple as that.

Unfortunately for Mr. Smith Frazer was not so sure about it later, as he was when he first wrote *The Golden Bough*. For example, in his own abridgment in one volume of the many volumes which had by then accumulated (in 1932) he says nothing about the non-historicity of Jesus, though he has quite a deal to say of Christianity and its likeness to the Paganism surrounding it, as it gradually evolved. As he says, "Taken altogether, the coincidences of the Christian with the heathen festivals are too close and too numerous to be accidental"—a quotation, I am sure, Mr. Smith will not like. Why didn't Frazer repeat the quotations Mr. Smith so triumphantly gives us?

Well, it so happens that one of Frazer's greatest friends was Dr. P. L. Couchoud, for whose brilliant study, *The Enigma of Jesus*, 1914, Frazer wrote an admiring introduction, which almost pulverises what he had claimed for the historicity of Jesus and Buddha. Couchoud was an uncompromising unbeliever in anybody called Jesus, and what could Frazer say about this in introducing a book which proclaims Jesus as a myth? Frazer wrote:

Whether, therefore, Dr. Couchoud be right or wrong in his treatment of the central figure of Christianity which he would banish from the real world of men to the limbo of error and hallucination, he appears to have laid a finger on a weak point in the chain of evidence on which hangs the religious faith of a great part of civilised mankind. The hypothesis of a purely mythical Christ is not novel, it has often been advocated in our time. To me, I confess, it seems to create more difficulties than it solves . . .

That may well be, but he was quite unable to answer Dr. Couchoud and I have an idea that few Christians would quote Frazer after reading the whole of his introduction to Couchoud's work with the same enthusiasm which characterises Mr. Smith's letter.

Is Religious Education a Cause of Delinquency

By ALEX STEWART

THE argument for the retention of religious education in schools is usually based on the need for a strong moral code, and a seemingly steady increase in delinquency, especially among the young is frequently cited as evidence of this need.

To relate present standards of morality to that of previous generations is an almost impossible task. Think of the parcel of rogues, clerical and lay, that Chaucer describes so vividly; think of the England of Dickens, of the Scotland of *Holy Willie's Prayer*.

Where is the norm? So far as public morality is concerned, at no time in our history has our care of the weak, the elderly, the unprotected been so comprehensive as it is now. It is nearly always the attitude of the Jeremiah to point to a golden age which, on closer examination, is found never to have existed.

It is, however possible to argue that over a recent period of time there has been an increase in scepticism so far as religious belief is concerned and at the same time there has been the increase in delinquency already mentioned.

To state that scepticism by itself is the sole cause of delinquency is too facile an explanation. If unbelief resulted in crime, then one would expect our prisons to be full of atheists and agnostics instead of, what is more likely, some of the followers of Rangers and Celtic. It is common experience that the homes of avowed unbelievers are on average among the most moral in our society. This is not surprising as no one can reach the conclusions of the agnostic or atheist without a great deal of independence of mind and intelligence; and how often do you find your delinquents at the top half of your class? It is fortunate for us that the greater the intelligence, the less likely the criminal.

Let me make it clear that I am not saying that all intelligent people are agnostics; I am saying, that an agnostic is likely to be intelligent and will behave in the same way as other intelligent people. It is not the intellectual approach to unbelief which constitutes the social danger.

A recent attempt on my part to teach religious education to an unenthusiastic fifth form of boys led me to conduct an inquiry into their beliefs. I composed a questionnaire asking, after a few simple introductory questions, some of increasing difficulty, such as,—“What is your definition of a Christian?”; “Do you consider yourself to be a Christian?”; “If not, why not?”; “Do you believe in God?”; “What do you consider the greatest problem facing the world today, excluding ‘the bomb’?”; “If the solution to this problem involved some sacrifice on your part, such as a somewhat lower standard of living, would you accept the sacrifice?” and so on.

Encouraging as many of the answers were, they nevertheless revealed a very great confusion of thought as well as a considerable amount of doubt and unbelief. The greatest confusion lay in the conception that standards of morality were founded on religion, a religion which many of them doubted. This led one youth to claim that although he was an atheist he was a Christian! It is in this confusion that the danger lies.

If a child is trained to believe that standards of morality are based on Christian dogma, and he later begins to doubt that dogma, it is very likely that he will disregard the standards of morality too. It seems to me quite possible to argue that some teenage delinquency is a result of a general, unconscious, unrealised withdrawal from old religious ideas and the moral code that went with them.

This results not so much in immorality as in amorality.

In the circumstances there are two possible answers, an all-out attempt to re-establish the old forms, or a consideration of an alternative approach. At this moment of time in the history of Western civilisation the first of these, the re-establishment, has probably become impossible. Our environment is scientific, and increasingly humanist. In any case, is it ever possible to put the clock back? The only satisfactory answer seems to be to make it clear that standards of morality are essential for reasons other than religious belief, and do not depend upon the latter.

It is easy to demonstrate that morality, no matter on what it is based, is not based upon religion. No one can judge whether the Ten Commandments have any moral authority or whether the actions of Christ are “good” unless he has a previous conception of “goodness”. As morality improves so does the understanding of what constitutes a Christian act. This is usually defined by Christians as a revelation of what Christianity really means. The bloodstained history of the Christian faith is a matter of deep regret to most modern Christians, although these acts in their day were hailed with delight by churchmen and laymen alike. They were regarded as both moral and Christian.

At first the Church's task is straightforward: teach a belief in the existence of God and the dogmas of the Church; state that God says this action is good, the other evil; affirm that God rewards goodness and punishes evil. This is a basis for a stable moral code in an unchanging, unsophisticated society with no need for any alteration of moral values. Whenever doubt of the premise arises or the religious moral code is called in question as not being necessarily moral—Is the segregation of children by religion not equally as immoral as segregation by colour?—then the Church's difficulties begin. What happens when there is no belief, or a doubtful belief in God?

For centuries education was the handmaiden of religion. In many countries this is still the case; the schoolmaster is subservient to the priest. Where this is not the case, as in Scottish public schools, there still lingers a faint shadow of clerical domination, shown particularly in any discussion on the value of religious education in schools, or in the co-option of clerics to education committees or even to the Teaching Council. If religious belief were essential to a highly developed moral code there might be some argument for this, but I have already attempted to show that morality which affects all men is not the same as religion which affects principally its adherents, and that the claim, which is constantly and loosely made, that religion and morality are one and the same, is logically wrong, and in our society dangerous for the community as a whole.

In these conditions the teacher's answer must be related to his circumstances alone. The problem facing him is not the same as that facing the minister or priest. To me the teacher has a higher duty to perform. Before him are the children of parents of widely differing views on religion, and of none. His duty should be to help to develop a moral human being regardless of religious belief; the duty of the cleric is to develop a moral Christian human being, within his particular church's definition of Christianity and morality. The teacher's duty transcends all dogmas; that of the priest is restricted and restrictive.

(Concluded on page 308)

This Believing World

THE BBC memorial talk on Albert Schweitzer was certainly memorable for two things. Here was one of the most famous men of our time, with a lifetime of humanism behind him, yet the speakers nowhere referred to him as an orthodox Christian; nor was what is perhaps his most famous work, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, mentioned. No wonder. Schweitzer was a heretic—a believer in a *man* Jesus, but not in a Son of God, or even in miracles, devils and angels—the stock-in-trade of all good Christians. The once famous *Quest* proved the cemetery of most of the “lives” of “our blessed Lord”, and therefore was best forgotten.

★

OH DEAR, the impossible has happened—in Italy of all places! The Pope toured a floodswapt suburb of Rome, and was actually *jeered* (*The People*, 5/9/65), by many who saw him. One of the flood victims shouted, “We don’t need your blessing—we need money to rebuild our homes”; and another screamed, “Even if God came here it would be no help”. Italy is obviously not so Catholic-ridden as is generally claimed (the suburb is, in fact, a Communist stronghold). At all events, what is going to happen to poor people if neither God nor the Pope is of any help whatever?

★

NOBLE LORD, or not, Dr. Donald Soper still considers himself an “infidel killer” (*London Evening Standard*, 3/9/65) in spite of the fact that he likes attacking anti-Socialists perhaps more than anti-Christians. Mind you he is always ready, on Tower Hill and elsewhere, to take on both at the same time! Naturally he is—as a convinced Socialist himself—quite sure that the Labour Party’s troubles were mostly due to the fact that it was not Socialist, and he most convincingly said so. Perhaps he may find that a goodly number of Labour MPs were not Christian either. Anyway, we cannot help wondering how many Methodists agree with him.

★

AS you may now be aware, that fount of theological wisdom the *London Evening News*, publishes every Saturday a “Reflection”, and in the September 4th issue we were informed that “the Christian faith teaches that there are two distinct worlds and that we are concerned with both of them”. Of course, the Christian faith is quite certain that there is another world to which all good Christians go and live for eternity; but it also teaches that there is a “bottomless” pit of eternal fire. A third world?

★

A CORRESPONDENT to the *Daily Mirror* (3/9/65), tried to get a prescription for the birth control pill from her doctor, and failed. It was apparently against his religious principles to prescribe them. Well, what did she expect from a doctor whose religion is against contraceptives? She did what all sensible people ought to do in similar circumstances—change her doctor. Will the Vatican Council change the Roman Catholic Church’s mind—and the lady’s doctor’s mind at the same time? That remains to be seen.

★

IT WAS recently reported that a notice in the window of an Army surplus shop was offering: “Ex-WD inter-denominational hymn books suitable for all purposes. 2s. 6d.”

IS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION A CAUSE OF DELINQUENCY?

(Continued from page 307)

So far as young children of primary age are concerned, morality can only be taught by example, encouragement, and inhibition. It cannot be an intellectual exercise. Young children are happy to do whatever meets with approval, and to behave as the adults around them behave. Shutting their eyes and saying a prayer meets with approval; so they do it although they haven’t the faintest idea of what it’s about. They could more readily understand the thanks due to the hands, white and coloured, that brought food to their breakfast table or contributed to the clothes they wear.

The problem in secondary schools is different.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery”.

“What’s wrong with adultery?” a facetious sixth-former might ask. Well, what is wrong with adultery? Is it based on the laws of inheritance? Does it involve danger to the person or the personality? An act of selfishness, of meanness, of theft? It must be a demonstrable crime against a human being or against society in general. Other than the unsatisfactory—“God says it’s a sin”, any reasons must have a basis in society. In the end, the explanation, whatever it is, must be rational. The strength of any moral law fundamentally lies in this, that it makes sense to human beings.

For older pupils, the best moral teaching that is ever done in schools arises naturally in class. All of literature is about the thoughts and actions of men and women, and it is here, if anywhere, that the most satisfactory work is done without any self-conscious attitudinising. We are all suddenly flung into a discussion on morality without being aware of it, and usually without any religious reference.

If moral codes are the result of the actions of human beings one towards another, of the absolute necessity for the realisation of the brotherhood of man, then this is what should be taught in school. The issue should not be clouded by the problematical and divisive forces of religious dogma. “No man is an island” applies in all human societies. I teach because someone else is sweeping the streets, and another attending the sick. We depend upon one another for comfort, assistance, love and the very basic necessities of life. It seems to me that morality can be clearly taught, and with a greater certainty of success, if it is discussed at this level.

What I have stated is, I believe, a case for the removal of religious education from the time-table.

A great many teachers in my experience, believers and otherwise, teach it with little satisfaction. Its removal would enable all children, regardless of creed, to come to the same school to learn of their common humanity and of the unimportance of religious difference.

This is the rule in America and in some parts of the Commonwealth and the Americans at least claim a church attendance far in excess of our own.

Religious belief is the concern of the family and the church; morality is the concern of us all.

OBITUARY

Mr. John Pardo who died recently aged fifty-nine had been a reader of THE FREETHINKER for many years. He was employed in the Housing Department of the Greater London Council, and had been actively associated with Morley College.

The General Secretary of the National Secular Society (Mr. W. McIlroy) conducted the committal ceremony at West Norwood Crematorium in September 11th. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Mr. Pardo’s family.

THE FREETHINKER

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INDOOR

Surbiton and Kingston Branches NSS (The White Hart, Kingston Bridge, Hampton Wick), Friday, September 24th, 8 p.m.: JACK ROBINSON, "The Anarchist View".

Worthing Humanist Group (Morelands Hotel, The Pier), Sunday, September 26th, 5.30 p.m.: Mrs. VIRGINIA PENN, "The Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding".

Notes and News

"WHATEVER one thinks of Pakistan's knife-edge exercise" in Kashmir—wrote Peter Preston from Karachi—"the simple fact is that it has brought a desperate reposte totally out of keeping with the scale and aim of the original murky initiative" (*The Guardian*, 10/9/65). That is, of course, the danger with knife-edge exercises, especially when hate seethes just below the surface. "Hindu and Muslim are more alien than we knew", remarked the *Observer* two days later. But didn't we know, and didn't we fear? Pakistan is a religious state, owing its very existence to Islam, and dedicated to it. There was considerable bloodshed and wholesale emigration when the partitioning took place; now Pakistan has a military ruler and India no longer has Nehru.

★

WHAT India has, however, is precious. "People seem incapable"—John Grigg said in his independent column in the *Guardian* (10/9/65)—"of grasping the unique importance of Indian democracy". We cannot afford, he went on "to treat a secular state, with a freely elected government and a free press, on a par with a theocratic state, ruled by a military dictator, and with a controlled press... The aim of the responsible Indian leaders, in which they have the broad backing of their people, has been and is to preserve the unity and integrity of their nation with its free institutions and its commitment to secularism". While not committing ourselves to all Mr. Grigg's ideas, we do think he has said something that is important.

★

POPE PAUL might prevaricate over some things (contraception and Jewish deicide, for instance) but not over the eucharist. An encyclical letter published on the eve of

the fourth session of the Vatican Council reaffirmed that the body and blood of Jesus Christ "are truly and substantially present" in the bread and wine during mass. Whilst not wishing to deny scholars investigating the mysteries of Catholicism, the Pope was speaking out against opinions "which disturb the minds of the faithful and produce in them no little confusion concerning the truths of the faith" (*The Observer*, 12/9/65). The encyclical is "seen as" or "believed to be" a reply to a group of West European theologians who suggested earlier this year that the bread and wine of the eucharist were purely symbols. The Pope hoped that Catholics would not be "frustrated by this spread of false opinions". Rationalisation, he pointed out, had been condemned many times by the Church.

★

IF THE Pope has not yet made up his mind—or at any rate spoken it—on birth control, many Roman Catholic doctors, as well as laymen and women, have done so. Even the ultra-conservative Guild of St. Luke, St. Cosmas and St. Damian has reported to the Vatican that a majority of its members no longer favour their Church's teaching. A questionnaire sent to 1,300 Catholic doctors was answered by 654 within the required three weeks. Only 242 considered the rhythm method satisfactory, compared with 325 who did not; 246 regarded contraception within marriage as "against the natural law", opposed to 381 who did not. Most significant, however, were the replies to the question "Do you in your own conscience think that contraception, within the bonds of marriage, should be permitted in circumstances such as (a) to prevent the break-up of a marriage, (b) for medical reasons, (c) for economic reasons"; to which 440, 487 and 415 affirmative answers were received, respectively, against 197, 150 and 219 in the negative.

★

THE report had been kept secret since it was written four months ago. No reference to it had appeared in the Guild's journal, but it was somehow leaked to the press just before the final session of the Vatican Council. It demonstrates, as the *Guardian* (10/9/65) remarked, "the unwillingness of Roman Catholic doctors in this country to accept without question the views of priestly authority on matters affecting the health of their patients". And, the *Guardian* pointed out that a great many of the doctors were distressed at the way Dr. John Marshall, "a neurologist and a churchman of completely orthodox views", had been appointed to the Papal commission of family planning "without reference to informed Catholic medical opinion in this country".

★

DISTRESS was also reported from the Jewish community in Britain. Dr. Jacob Herzog, the Israeli diplomat, is too ill to take up the post of Chief Rabbi to which he was appointed last May. The community "which is seriously split by doctrinal beliefs" had hoped that Dr. Herzog, who was born in Dublin and educated in London, would help to restore unity (*Daily Telegraph*, 8/9/65). "This obviously means that we will have to start the search all over again", said Alfred H. Silverman, secretary to the Chief Rabbinate Council.

★

THOSE two dependables Josephus and Jesus are the centre of our controversial issue this week. F. A. Ridley criticises H. Cutner, who in turn criticises George R. Goodman. But Mr. Goodman compliments Mr. Cutner! Our other article, "Is Religious Education a Cause of Delinquency?" is reprinted by kind permission of the editor of the *Scottish Educational Journal* and of the author Alex Stewart.

Their Faith is Vain

By GEORGE R. GOODMAN

H. CUTNER'S vigorous article on the Josephus passage forgery was very timely. Here are a few more nails for the coffin of that more than dead faith.

As Origen (185-254) did not know anything at all about Josephus mentioning a Jesus who was "The" Christ who was condemned to die "on the cross" by Pilate, but Eusebius (264-340) did, it is obvious that when the Church dogmas (there were many versions, each one crazier than the other!) were gradually formulated, the various bishops who contested each other, searched desperately for some "confirmation", not only for their ridiculous creeds, but more important still, for their mythical Jesus figure.

Alas, as no Jesus ever existed, they could not find anything; so they resorted to fraud. The Josephus passage was fabricated and inserted, rather clumsily, (because the preceding paragraph and the one following belong together) in the decade between 310 and 320. It was a time when forgery was not a crime, but a "holy act", receiving full ecclesiastical approval, providing it was done for the edification and glorification of the Holy Roman Catholic Church and her doctrines.

Likewise, all the Epistles of Paul were doctored and inoculated with pages and pages of dogmatical gibberish, with an utter disregard to truth and historicity. Considering that Paul never knew a man called "Jesus Christ" or had ever heard of him, (because he had not yet been invented) the entire insertions of which there are hundreds, are the acme of priestly overbearance and arrogance and are unsurpassed for sheer insolence and shameless intimidation.

A good example are the first 32 verses of I. Cor. 15. They even had the nerve to say in verse 14, "And if Christ be not risen then our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain; . . . ye are yet in your sins". Well, their faith is vain!

Christian apologists often say that Josephus mentions "Jacobus, the brother of Jesus called Christ". It was a comparatively easy matter for the papal scribes to put in a little sentence like that; it does not prove anything at all.

Josephus was at Rome when the Christiani were supposed to have been singled out for special persecution and cruel martyrdom by imperial tyrants, yet he knows nothing at all about such happenings. He did not mention the so-called "twelve Apostles"—because they never existed. They were taken over from Egyptian mythology, where they were the "Twelve Saviours of the Treasure of Light".

Their corollary can be found in the twelve signs of the Zodiac through which the Sun had to pass, and as the "Christ" figure was, without a doubt, a solar deity—taken over from Egyptian and other sources—it is only natural that he, as the Sungod, should be surrounded by his twelve zodiacal satellites or assistants.

The twelve in Egypt were: Sut, Horus, Shu, Hapi, Ap-uat, Kabhsenuf, Amsta, Anup, Ptah, Atum, Sau, and Hu. They rowed the solar bark for Ra, with Horus at the prow. They appear again in our own Arthurian legends as the twelve knights around the table (which was round, like the path of the Sun!) They were also the twelve gods with Odin in their midst (Scandinavian myths) holding court in Valhalla; they appear again in the Icelandic sagas (the two Eddas); and they are already in the

Old Testament as the twelve sons of Jacob; all the solar heroes were saved in a basket of reeds, Moses being no exception.

The Egyptian "Christos" says in the *Ritual*: "Ra maketh his appearance at the Mount of Glory, with the cycle of the gods about him". In the *Pistis Sophia* the Gnostic Jesus becomes the teacher of the twelve on the Mount of Olives (the mount of the Olive Tree of Dawn) and says: "When I first came into the world, I brought with me twelve powers, I took them from the twelve saviours of the treasure of light". Here is incontestable evidence that the twelve disciples represent twelve solar gods not men in Judaea!

All the solar gods ended their childhood, or subjection to Mother Nature's laws, at twelve and entered the period of spiritual maturity, consummating it at the age of thirty! Even today, a Jewish boy becomes, on his thirteenth birthday, a "man" and a "son of Duties" (Bar Mitzvah) and as such an active and responsible member of the congregation.

If an ancient Egyptian could today enter a Roman Catholic Church, he would find himself very much at home, for there he would see a statue of his beloved goddess Isis with the Infant Horus in her arms, taken over from pre-Christian Egypt, without the alteration of even a single stroke!

Looking at the stained glass windows (incidentally an Egyptian invention), he would behold Osiris, the head of the Trinity, duly taken over into Christianity as Joseph. In a niche, he would detect another statue of the Virgin Mother with a Crown on her head and standing on a blue-painted moon which was her particular symbol and holding in her hand an orb.

Then perchance, he would see Horus the Elder (now called Jesus) with the Sun-disc (not an Aura) behind his head, in Egyptian fashion clearly denoting, that he was the Sungod.

Then he would hear, if he understood English a priest telling the unenlightened people that yellow was the colour of Roman Catholicism (he would carefully avoid telling them it was the colour of the Sungod) and urging the highly superstitious women always to buy yellow pullovers and caps for their babies, to tie their teenage girls' hair with yellow ribbons and for adult wear, yellow cardigans and blouses. By doing so, they would be under the "special protection" of the "Mother of God" and her Son the holy Jesus himself.

That visitor from ancient Egypt attending another service in a Roman Catholic church, would be amazed to see the officiating priest holding up a gilded monstrance (containing the "consecrated host", actually a thin wafer-like piece of unleavened bread, relic of a Jewish custom), for the adoration of the people.

The ancient Egyptian would immediately recognise in that ritualistic utensil his sungod's emblem, a glorious Sun with 28 (4 weeks) extending flame-like rays (!); and he would marvel at the sight of the people falling on their knees,—thereby clearly demonstrating that after three to five thousand years, they still owed allegiance to his beloved Osiris!

But to come back to the interpolation in the text of Josephus's *Antiquities*.

The situation round about the year 310 when, it is assumed the above interpolation was made, was very

similar to one that happened only a few years ago, within the memory of all of us.

It was in 1947 when some jars containing biblical manuscripts were discovered in almost inaccessible rock caves in the Palestinian desert near the Dead Sea, followed by further discoveries in 1949, 1952 and 1956. The sensational press, together with its radio and TV allies, sprang into action, for they sensed a rich harvest by supplying fanciful accounts about events that would interest the pious—and the not-so-pious—readers and listeners. Nothing was spared to whip up the fervid imaginations, not only of devout church-people, but also of millions of pseudo-Christians, to fever heat.

Was not this a golden opportunity to prove to the world that those wicked detractors of the faith, those pestiferous Freethinkers and their ilk, were utterly wrong, and that the "Saviour of Mankind" and the alleged "founder" of the 167 varieties (110 more than Heinz's) of Christianity really existed? Alas for their childish expectations, the ecclesiastical fireworks display didn't go off. For the devil of truth (who always helps the Freethinkers!) had gone round with a watering can and had sprinkled the beautiful Roman Candles and Catherine wheels with unholy water, with the sad result that all failed to explode.

In their desperate eagerness to prove that their incarnated God was not a myth, but a historical figure who had actually lived in a kind of monastery (probably belonging, at one time, to the Essene Brotherhood) these defenders of the faith performed some strange contortions. Especially when they found out that, far from confirming their shaky dogmatism, those disappointing manuscripts threatened still further to undermine an already untenable position!

Various Church assemblies were convened to which only clergymen were admitted, as advertised in the daily press.

Why the secrecy? Because the ecclesiastical authorities feared that some nosy parishioners might ask awkward questions and the clergy must be given some "guiding lines" on how to counter such attacks. Moreover, their nonplussed and most disappointed ministers (they might even waver, who knows?) had to be confidentially informed that, as far as their "Christ Jesus" was concerned, not a single item of the existence of such a figure had been discovered. Not so much as a word!

They were told that the only fact that had transpired was that in the discovered monastery at Qumram was a Superior whom his subordinates called "*Moreh Zadik*" which is Hebrew and means: pious or righteous Teacher. And that in the outside world was a "wicked priest" who opposed him.

They could make out of that as much as they liked (and they did!), implying that the "Teacher of righteousness" (note the subtle alteration from adjective to qualifying noun) was none other than—guess who?

As the discovered manuscripts covered a period from 167 BC to the year 68 of our era, and as they did not confirm anything appertaining to Christian dogmatism, they were in fact the greatest and most dangerous challenge to present day Christianity!

The position today is that the Church keeps pretty quiet about the Dead Sea Scrolls, because it has nothing to shout about and the less said, the better. However, an enormous amount of literature has sprung up in English, German, Dutch and French.

The position in Britain resolved itself into a simple stratagem. Those authors who indulged in the greatest flights of fantasies and whose writings would be of inestim-

able advantage to the established church by supplying the right kind of opiate for her ignorant and untutored "faithfuls", received the greatest publicity in press, radio and TV.

The books of these authors were issued in cheap editions, so as to make them available to the greatest number of people who, in most cases, were quite unable to discriminate whether the author was a devout churchman or not.

But the most important outcome of the whole matter is this. If the decade 1947-1957 had been like the decade 310-320 (when the Josephus passage was most likely manufactured and the masses could neither read nor write, but were completely dominated by the clergy), then I have not the slightest doubt that somebody would have inserted into the Dead Sea Scrolls a suitable reference to their "Christ Jesus" and thus repeated the same kind of forgery enacted 1640 years ago!

To take over a trinity of gods from paganism and miraculously turn the three into one and the one into three was not just a matter of mere theological juggling, but a crude combination of sacerdotal magic with ecclesiastical despotism. Reasoning was not allowed to penetrate this triple screen of obscurantism. The dupes and devotees were simply bludgeoned into believing.

The Church-history of the first millenium of our era contains ample proof that to raise a man, who had never existed, to the status of a trinitarian god presented a host of unanticipated difficulties. In the third, fourth and fifth centuries, any number of pompous prelates, bishops, presbyters, deacons and theologians wanted to exhibit their cleverness and erudition by expounding theories about the "true nature" of their saviour-god and his family.

Fatuous arguments went on for centuries about such idiocies: whether Jesus was divine or not, whether he was of the *same* nature as God or of a *like* nature, whether he was conceived in an earthly manner and born of a woman, or immaculately conceived without the assistance of a male, whether his mother should be called "Mother of God" or Mother of Christ, and whether Jesus possessed two natures, one human and one divine (or vice versa) *ad infinitum*.

Anyhow, at the very stormy Church Council of Chalcedon (451) Jesus was declared a "God-man", but this was surpassed as far as sheer stupidity was concerned, at the synod of Toledo (589) when it was declared that the "Holy Spirit" proceeded from the Father *and* the Son (*filioque*). This declaration caused a split between West and East, as the latter declared that the Spirit proceeded only from the Father.

Ever since Nicaea (325), when the maddest of all creeds was manufactured, declaring that Jesus was "begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father" i.e. "consubstantial", the differences between the various emperors and their bishops, became so marked that the many factions called each other "heretics" and began to murder each other on a wholesale scale. It was the birth of the proverbial Christian intolerance!

In those days, and right throughout the Middle Ages, to incur the epithet "heretic" was equal to being accused of murder and treason; it warranted not only incarnation in vile dungeons, but also tortures of the most horrible kind and even burnings at the stake, whilst priests chanted hymns in praise of their "saviour and redeemer".

The whole edifice of Christianity is based on shifting sands and is bound to disintegrate. The creeds are archaic and were made for an age that has long passed. In those days, only a small percentage of the people could read or write and they believed all the invented miracles and never

questioned the veracity of their "holy" book.

But antiquity does not sanctify the absurd. Today, knowledge and reasoning displace ignorance and superstition. Nowadays, people laugh at the empty threats of blackmailing priests and do not wait to be excommunicated, but have the courage and sagacity to expel themselves!

Crafty priestcraft has had its day. For a long time, the hierarchy of the Church has known that the New Testament was a pious fraud and the figure of a Christ a complete myth. When Pope Leo X (1513-21) a contemporary of Martin Luther was approached about the improbability of the entire Jesus story being true, his

jesuitical answer was, "What profit hath not that fable of Christ brought us!"

This shattering remark should be displayed on every wayside-pulpit and printed at the head of every church-magazine.

The mental liberation of mankind can only come through being more critical of the many religious fairy tales that the men in black cassocks peddle to the ignorant masses. The remedy lies in instilling a thirst for knowledge, adult education; telling people that they have nothing to fear, that they can only lose their chains, for the truth shall make them free. Then they will realise that their ecclesiastical faith was vain!

Lord Soper on the Defensive

The usually assertive Lord Soper was distinctly on the defensive in his discussion with F. H. Amplett Micklewright in the ITV programme *Sunday Break* on September 12th. As in Lord Soper's earlier discussion with National Secular Society president D. H. Tribe, the two disputants were allowed to confront each other without a chairman, and once again the experiment was successful.

Challenged at the bar of history, Mr. Micklewright led off, the Christian Church cannot be exonerated. Lord Soper conceded that there were many things that Christianity should be ashamed of, but he distinguished between the Christianity of Christ and what he called "perversions" of it. The two should not be confused.

But what did we know of Christ? A few fragments taken from a lifetime and recalled some 30 or 40 years after, said Mr. Micklewright. We cannot know the historical Jesus, the life of the historical Jesus could never be written. On the contrary, argued Lord Soper, it is not difficult to see the picture of Jesus, the man emerges "as a whole".

If this was so, Mr. Micklewright countered, why did Paul not see the picture? He knew nothing of the empty tomb; if he had he would have used it. No, the resurrection had no basis in history. There was, Lord Soper said, a recognisable pattern of life among the early Christians, and the fact of Jesus was real to them.

The early Church came to terms with life, Mr. Micklewright agreed, but the "pattern" of Tertullian, for instance, was very different from that of Clement of Alexandria. But Lord Soper was not to be drawn into particularities. The early Christians set up a socialist community he declared.

If so, said Mr. Micklewright, there were plenty of parallels in oriental communities to a pentecostal community. But Lord Soper had to face the fact that it was the Pauline pattern of life that had conquered Europe—and incidentally lost Asia. Prior to Paul we were on uncertain, boggy, historical ground. We could only talk about what did happen, not what should or might have done. And he gave some concrete cases of Roman Catholic, Church of England and Free Church teachings on marriage and divorce.

Nobody doubts that the Christian Church is a fallible organisation, said Lord Soper. But, said Mr. Micklewright, the Church tells me that I should accept a revelation. Yet, "where reason has got to play, supernaturalism has gone out of the window".

"It isn't a rational world", said Lord Soper, "but I believe it is a reasonable one". And he asked us to look at what Jesus said about war. "I take my pacifism from Jesus", he added. Mr. Micklewright doubted this.

Both Lord Soper and he regarded war as a disaster, and he thought Lord Soper's pacifism was the result of thinking about the world today. Anyway, other people came to a diametrically opposed view from reading the New Testament.

Lord Soper insisted, however, that there was "Somebody who speaks out of the first century to me now". And he instanced the Sermon on the Mount. That, said Mr. Micklewright, had to be seen against the eschatological belief of the imminent end of the world: one would have no use for one's cloak etc., if the end of the world was nigh.

Well, concluded Lord Soper, "it has brought happiness to me".

Details of membership of the National Secular Society and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Telephone: HOP 2717.

CORRESPONDENCE

A COMMENT FROM WEST GERMANY

I should like to comment on your note on Dibelius and Bonhoeffer in *THE FREETHINKER* (13/8/65), when you cited *New Statesman* reviews on two books recently translated into English. Geoffrey Barraclough had remarked that "the German Church struggle was not a political but a theological one of which the historians of the German Resistance have commonly taken too little account".

The Churches' return to power in 1945 was based on their falsifying history and especially their role within the previous 12 years and the immediately preceding decades. They camouflaged themselves behind a handful of martyrs who as individuals had opposed their Church when opposing National Socialism. As a masterpiece of falsification the Churches used their international connections to make the world believe that they, and they alone, had resisted National Socialism; and that the Hitler regime had been basically atheistic. None of this was true. But the Church organisation was intact, and was in a position to lay the foundation for this anti-communist, anti-atheistic state against Russia. Hitler had opposed the Jewish-Bolshevik state. Hitler and the top men of his party never left their Church. Small wonder that National Socialists in this country, efficient in anti-communism, are holding key positions in this "representative democracy" of Western Germany.

Germany was ripe for socialism in 1918. True the ferocities in Russia caused many to hesitate, but it was the West's interest—Treaty of Versailles—not to let this country become socialist. The American-Norwegian sociologist Thorsten Veeblen was right when he said in 1921 that Keynes's book on the Treaty only told half the truth. The "Parchment of the Treaty", Veeblen wrote, "is anti-communism. Europe must start anew to quarrel with a problem solved by the treaty. The result will be another world war".

Barraclough is right when stating that the opposition of the Churches to National Socialism was merely a quarrel on theological problems. National Socialist directives urged the teachers back into the Churches, demanded crosses in each classroom. It was the many groups that National Socialists had to get together. Now and then one or the other tried to evade the strict orders this country had to observe by signing the concordat.

As long as the same personalities who supported Hitler continue this present anti-communist state, there is small wonder that historians avoid the truth. It is not the wording of the constitution (*Grundgesetz*) that makes one tremble, but the present interpretation. As article 21 makes the parties the pillars of the state, all three of them will combine in a big coalition after election on the 19th. All three of them will guarantee the continuation of anti-communism.

GERDA GUTTENBERG (Nürnberg)

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Charles Bradlaugh

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LABADIE COLLECTION

By F. A. RIDLEY

THAT nowadays incredibly remote and unreal age still named after its titular figurehead, Queen Victoria, was marked by extreme contrasts. On the one hand it was *par excellence* the age of the financial and industrial bourgeoisie, smug, eminently respectable—the supreme Victorian virtue—and above all, intensely hypocritical; as indeed they had to be in order to reconcile the harsh facts of Victorian life with the unctuous religiosity that the Victorians professed. On the other hand, probably no age has been more prolific in both odd and eccentric characters, and in startling acts of defiance against the most cherished taboos elevated by popular prejudice to the sacrosanct level of religious and moral dogmas. It was the age of Mrs. Grundy (Victoria RJ); it was equally the age of Karl Marx and Charles Bradlaugh. The spectacular effects of *Das Kapital* were, it is true, not fully disclosed within the precise limits of the Victorian era, but the strong case of Bradlaugh burst like a thunderclap into the humid atmosphere of “Good Queen Victoria’s golden days”—to paraphrase the Vicar of Bray who, as the supreme conformist in our literature, would surely have disapproved most strongly of Bradlaugh, one of our greatest non-conformists.

The Bradlaugh Case

Today, most radical thinkers would probably subscribe to the thesis that God’s own country, the USA, represents the supreme example of collective conformity in the Western World. It is accordingly all the more gratifying to see the latest study of *The Bradlaugh Case* (Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 50s.) emanate from an American university.

Its author, Professor Walter L. Arnstein, was over here a few years ago busily engaged in collecting material for his present work, and he has certainly done his job with professional thoroughness. Whilst it is probably impossible at this time of day to add anything—at least of major actual importance—to the well-known official biography by the iconoclast’s daughter, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner (the mother of the present genial President of the World Union of Freethinkers) with the collaboration of that most encyclopedic of modern freethought scholars, John M

Robertson, Professor Arnstein has documented the famous case extremely thoroughly and has in any case the advantage of objectivity that only a later age can bestow.

Complex Question

Perhaps indeed the learned author is open to the charge of over-documentation, for his documentary trees are so thick in places that one almost loses sight of the wood of the Bradlaugh case considered as a thing in itself. But certainly anyone whose memory is at fault upon any feature of this extremely complex case, will find it all set forth with all the i’s dotted and t’s crossed. As a kind of Baedeker guide through the labyrinthine mazes of *l’affaire Bradlaugh*, Professor Arnstein’s volume is invaluable. For the Bradlaugh case was extremely complex; in fact it almost ranks with that famous puzzle which haunted the secret diplomacy of the Victorian era, the question of Sleiswig-Holstein, which Prince Bismarck summed up in the cynical observation that only three people had ever understood it: Palmerston, who was dead, a Danish diplomat who was in a lunatic asylum, and himself who had forgotten it! One imagines that the participants in the Bradlaugh affair, from Gladstone downwards, must have felt very similar.

Bradlaugh and the Victorian Age

Walter Arnstein adds this subtitle: “A Study in late Victorian Opinion and Politics”. Here, the operative word is clearly “Victorian”, for it is difficult to imagine the Bradlaugh case

occurring in any other age but that of that royal anti-type of Mrs. Grundy. For in essence, the case of Charles Bradlaugh, MP, was simple. The electors of Northampton, surely knew their own minds (even a contemporary Tory journal described the town as “a stinking den of republican cobblers”) when they sent Bradlaugh, not once but repeatedly, to the House of Commons as their duly elected representative. For Charles Bradlaugh by the 1880s was already far from unknown; in fact quite the contrary. As an Atheist of international repute—for the National Secular Society had been founded long before in 1866—his anti-theistic opinions were already universally known. Obviously any oath taken by him which involved theistic



belief, could only be taken by Bradlaugh in a purely formal and official sense.

In this sense Bradlaugh was always prepared—a cardinal fact that emerges more clearly than ever from Professor Arnstein's comprehensive narrative—to take the oath of allegiance obligatory upon every MP in a purely formal manner, even though both as an Atheist and a Republican, he could not possibly take it literally, so as to involve belief in both divine and human monarchy, both of which he repudiated. Such was the Bradlaugh case, in essence an entirely simple one which the most elementary common sense could and would have solved with the minimum of fuss.

But it was precisely at this point that our author's operative word "Victorian", came into effective play. For the Victorian age was, in fact, anything but a rational age. It was, conversely perhaps the most hypocritical age that this country has ever known, and—as the case of Bradlaugh demonstrated with transparent clearness—in the then Prime Minister, Gladstone (the leader of the Liberal Party of which Bradlaugh himself was one of the more radically-minded members), Victorian hypocrisy found its supreme embodiment. For the Grand Old Man had carried the art of self-deception to such a consummate point of artistry, that he was not even conscious of it himself! Lord Randolph Churchill, the other major figure in the case, was not a hypocrite so much as an unscrupulous political gangster out to promote his own particular brand of racketeering by blatant appeals to religious prejudices which he could hardly have shared himself. (A generation later, another leading light of the Tory party, F. E. Smith, was also a past-master at this form of political blackmail).

Victorian Incongruity

Put briefly the causes of this profound hypocrisy were social in character and arose ultimately from the complete incongruity between the actual role of the predatory imperialistic and exploiting Britain of fact and the highly moral England of official fiction; the England which blew the Indian mutineers alive from cannon, and the England that simultaneously observed the Sabbath with puritanical fidelity. To bridge the actually impassable gulf between these two contemporary Englands, a social myth was psychologically necessary. Here, the Victorians resorted to the oldest myth of all, God! They evidently agreed with Voltaire that if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.

Now whilst Charles Bradlaugh was many other things besides, he was pre-eminently an Atheist, and to let an Atheist into the Holy of Holies of the Victorian establishment, the House of Commons, would be at least the beginning of the end of God's social utility, without which (as both Queen Victoria and Gladstone were firmly convinced) nothing further stood between society and red ruin and the breaking up of laws. I suggest that this was the real issue that ran like a continuous thread throughout all the intricacies and complexities which underlay the Bradlaugh case. It is a thesis abundantly illustrated, if not explicitly affirmed, in Professor Arnstein's profusely documented pages. I submit that the Bradlaugh case represents surely the supreme example of Victorian bourgeois-religious hypocrisy in the political sphere, just as the Oscar Wilde case a few years later represented its supreme example in the sphere of morals.

Newman and Manning

An interesting point which appears to emerge from the case is that the religious leaders seem to have been as divided upon the propriety of admitting an avowed Atheist to take the name of God in vain as were the

politicians. It is interesting to note that Newman, the most famous Christian of his day, did not see any harm in Bradlaugh taking the parliamentary oath. There may, however, have been a reason for this that has escaped Professor Arnstein. Newman's fellow cardinal, Manning, was one of Bradlaugh's most bitter and influential critics. As the relations between the two cardinals were not precisely cordial, this may well have influenced Newman in the opposite direction.

Bradlaugh was of course, a Victorian; he belonged to what is now an irrevocably vanished age, and on many points at least his views cannot be ours. At the same time our author hardly seems to demonstrate his usual critical acumen when he dubs the present-day National Secular Society a "Victorian Institution", merely because it was founded in the reign of Queen Victoria. Is Professor Arnstein to be himself described as a McCarthyite merely because he had the ill-luck to be a countryman and contemporary of the deservedly ill-famed Senator? I think that it is really rather arbitrary of him to compare the founder of the National Secular Society favourably with his two, in my opinion, equally eminent successors, G. W. Foote and Chapman Cohen. It would surely be more correct to describe each of these three great Presidents as an authentic master in his own special field. The admitted fact that Bradlaugh had other interests besides atheism is surely irrelevant. As for atheism itself today, the arguments in its favour only differ from those in vogue in Bradlaugh's day, by being much more strongly supported by contemporary scientific discovery; e.g. modern cosmology has put paid to the argument from design, still at least plausible in Bradlaugh's day; whilst the Dead Sea Scrolls have abolished the last vestiges of even religious originality in the New Testament. Bradlaugh himself would have nothing to retract but much to add were he able to restate the case for atheism today.

Finally, in congratulating Professor Arnstein upon an immensely learned and, in general, excellent book, we may console ourselves (if not our American author) with the reflection that if Charles Bradlaugh had a rough passage in Victorian England, there have also been periods in American history from Thomas Paine to the Committee for Un-American Activities where the great iconoclast would probably have had an even rougher one.

South African Rationalist Refused Passport

James Ravell who made the Afrikaans translation of Bertrand Russell's *Why I am not a Christian*, which the South African Rationalist Association published in 1960, has been refused a passport to enable him to continue his studies in the Netherlands. When security police interviewed him in connection with his application for a passport, he was told: "You hold views which are foreign to those held by the majority of South Africans".

A teacher in a Coloured school in the Cape, Mr. Ravell was one of the founders of the Cape Town Branch of the Rationalist Association and its first honorary secretary. In 1960 he won a prize of one hundred dollars awarded by the International Humanist and Ethical Union for an essay entitled *Ethical Humanism as a Way of Life*.

Mr. Ravell, who holds the BA degree of the University of Cape Town, was offered a bursary by the Stichting Universitair Asyl Fonds, which would have enabled him to proceed with further studies in his chosen subject history, at a university in Holland.

Window on the World—Through the Foreign Press

By OTTO WOLFGANG

L'Express (France)

OWING to governmental pressure the mental climate of Bulgaria is changing. In order to eliminate "religious obscurantism" non-conformists are being paid certain premiums, e.g. 20 Levas (£6 15s. 0d.) to parents who refrain from having their child baptised, 60 Levas to couples getting married without religious ceremonies, and 10 Levas for a civil interment (April 19th).

The same issue reported that Mme Françoise Dior-Jordan—the Second-in-Command of our British Nazis—has given Frs 200,000 to Jean-Claude Monnet, leader of the *Parti Proletarien National-Socialiste*, to assist him become the Fuhrer of the Neo-Nazi organisations of Northern Europe.

Roger Peyrefitte, author of the bestseller *The Keys of St. Peter*, has published another study, *Les Juifs* (The Jews, Flammarion, Frs. 24) to show that most of our leading politicians and intellectuals have had at one time or another an admixture of Jewish blood, e.g. our Royal Family, Adenauer, Segni, Salazar, de Gaulle, Fidel Castro, Kennedy and President Johnson, not to mention Loyola (founder of the Jesuits) and Torquemada, the infamous Grand Inquisitor of the Inquisition.

We may note in this connection that a recent issue of the *Jewish Quarterly* quoted from a book by Donald E. Worcester *inter alia*: "During the Middle Ages, the most distinguished Christian families mixed with Jews whenever this was both advantageous and possible . . . When the persecutions began, many New Christians and the descendants of earlier converts were fearful of taint . . . Spanish society grew more and more fanatic in its Christianity . . . Few were so bitter against the Jews as the New Christians. Torquemada . . . was a convert and Ferdinand of Aragon was of Jewish descent on his mother's side".

Reviewing *Les Juifs*, which claims to counter anti-semitism and the ludicrous aims of Aryan purity of blood, J.-F. Revel pointed out that unnecessary snooping of the Peyrefitte kind gives boost to anti-semites who in their irrational hatred tend to generalise certain faults as arising from inferior blood in racial or social minorities. What they would excuse as Dionysiac exuberance, high-jinks and flirtatious levity in the Gaul would become the "horrid sexual obsession whipped up by alcoholism" in the Negro; or what is "shrewd prudence" in the peasant becomes "base and contemptible avarice" in the Jew.

Newsweek (USA)

Under the heading "Rites and Wrongs" an article dealt with the conversion of Luci Johnson to Catholicism and the uproar it caused in the separate branches of Christianity. Had she not been the President's daughter, it would of course not have been sensational at all. But "in the current euphoria surrounding the Christian-unity movement the mishandling of Luci's baptism was a timely reminder or how easily religious sensibilities are bruised" (July 19th).

Rabbi Blau, the fiery 72-year-old leader of Judaism's small ultra-orthodox sect, the *Neturei Karta*, whose wife died in 1963, felt lonely and approached a *shadchen* (professional marriage broker); the latter selected for the rabbi a former French resistance worker, Madelaine Feraille, who had hidden Jews from the Nazis and eventually became converted to Judaism. She adopted ultra-orthodoxy because, as she explained, "if I do something

I do it one hundred per cent".

But when the rabbinical court heard of the rabbi's engagement to the converted *shiksa*—who had adopted the new name of Ruth ben-David—it was horrified and pronounced such a liason "would only be grist for the mills of scoffers and gossipmongers". It would, the court ruled, not "benefit a man of his stature". However, the rabbi seems adamant in his marriage plans (August 9th).

La Raison (France)

Our French contemporary reported in its August issue that the thorny question of the Vatican Council whether or not to clear the Jews of the scriptural charge of deicide (i.e. the ludicrous idea or having "killed" a god), has in particular embarrassed the Mohammedans living in Israel. The Arabs have no justification on religious grounds to reject the absolution of Jewry, they do it for political reasons; now the cadis of the Israeli Mohammedans have found what they consider to be a way out: they issued a declaration that according to verse 156 of the Sura on "Women", the Koran asserts that Jesus was neither killed nor crucified. Being divine he was fully aware of his opponents' plans and asked for one of his disciples to substitute for him, take on his outer appearance and be sacrificed. Obviously not too clever a subterfuge!

Monthly Review (USA)

The well-known American Humanist, Dr. Corliss Lamont, argues with the philosopher Barrow Dunham (whose book *Man Against Myth* every freethinker ought to have read) who in his last publication *Heroes and Heretics*, stated that lately there have been no indictments for blasphemy. This, says Lamont, is a generalisation, considering that books are still being banned on all sorts of accusations such as "obscenity" and that non-believers are socially or economically ostracised. It is true that the Churches themselves no longer persecute, but the powers-that-be do it, and it is just as difficult for an avowed atheist as for a professed communist to get a position as a teacher or civil servant, or have his uninhibited say on radio or TV (April issue).

Le Nouvel Observateur

A new publication on the relations between the Vatican and the USSR by Maxime Mourin (Editions Payot) is reviewed, showing that the demise of both Stalin and Pius XII appear to have opened a certain rapprochement between the two fronts. Jailed princes of the Church are being released, Soviet Russians were admitted as observers to three sessions of the Vatican Council, etc. (June 17th).

Similarly, Philip Ben, correspondent of *Le Monde* (Paris) and an Israel paper, deals with religion in Russia in an article published in the American *New Republic* of December 26th, 1964. Since 1961 more churches have been closed and the clergy has to pay taxes. Quite naturally the Soviet government could not make exceptions for the Jewish cult, and treats them no more favourably than the orthodox church.

The Churchman (USA)

This is a quite exceptional monthly in that it is the organ of the Protestant Episcopal Church and yet a highly intelligent and progressive paper. Reporting on a study of the (Concluded on page 316)

This Believing World

THE one thing that did not happen when Malcolm Muggeridge undertook a trip to Lourdes for BBC TV, was a miracle. We had instead some interesting glimpses of pilgrims in high hopes of being cured, and plenty of pilgrims who were not sick—though whether he showed us more of the swindle of Lourdes than Zola did in his shattering novel named after the town is a matter of opinion. We may be wrong, but we thought Mr. Muggeridge looked rather disappointed at the absence of a thoroughgoing miracle, or even of a cure, but these disappointments are no doubt given deliberately to try us.

★

BUT why are there so few miracles these days? In those wonderful early years just after the appearance of the Virgin Mary to Bernadette, miracles of healing were almost as plentiful as blackberries, and they no doubt contributed to the astonishing popularity of the shrine ever since. But where, oh where are the miracles now? Even Mr. Muggeridge could not tell us.

★

BBC Sunday biblical expositions were once a weekly feature, but during the past year or so, we have seen instead very reverent "Songs of Praise", or "Hallelujah Choruses". However, an attempt to get the Bible back at all costs has resulted in a lecture on the New Testament. The two we heard were given by eminent professors who did their utmost to expound the gospels to us without, strange to say, assuring us that they were inspired by Almighty God, and as such were to be implicitly believed.

★

THE first speaker, Professor C. F. Evans did his utmost to prove that the gospels were authentic, and products of the first century, without producing a scrap of evidence of any kind. He appeared to rely on Justin Martyr (c. 140 AD) and his "Memoirs of the Apostles" which were "perhaps" our four gospels. But our canonical gospels are not Memoirs of the Apostles at all; they were meant to be biographies of "our blessed Lord", and therefore could not possibly be whatever Justin had before him when writing his *Apologies*.

★

THE second speaker, Professor D. B. Bineham, spent most of his time discussing Mark, not as inspired by God, but as having been built up on a number of religious stories, each complete in itself. We could not help wondering where Jesus and his Father came in. Still, it is better to discuss the gospels, no matter how, than to boycott them, even if the discussions leave out the miracles of Jesus altogether. After all, there are sincere Christians who do not exactly believe in miracles with the same enthusiasm as the Pope and his cardinals do.

★

HIS Holiness, we are told, is to have a senate of his cardinals to help him run the Catholic Church in a way which will (or may) appeal even to convinced unbelievers. He can see, we are glad to say, that the dear old days of complete subservience have gone for ever, and that it is just as important to discuss the Pill as it is to discuss the infidel machinations of the devil—if not more so.

OBITUARY

Mrs. Amy Cross who died in hospital recently at the age of ninety-nine was a staunch Freethinker. Her husband died thirty years ago and she had no close relatives.

Mr. W. Collins, a member of the Executive Committee of the National Secular Society conducted the committal ceremony at Liverpool Crematorium on September 16th.

WINDOW ON THE WORLD

(Concluded from page 315)

cause of anti-semitism, it states that unfortunately it must be admitted that the churches themselves are doing much to spread hatred and prejudice, and the more orthodox people are, the more they show anti-semitic tendencies. In particular Communist censure of religion is not without foundation seeing that there are men willing to serve their god but not their fellow-men who are in bitter need of help. If religion is tantamount to doing good, then many atheists are better Christians than the many who eagerly observe religious rules but do not care about the suffering of mankind. This comes from 80 pages of a report drawn up by the Committee for Christian Belief, with the conclusion that in matters of belief a Christian cannot adopt Marxist unbelief, but for the rest he is free to be a Socialist, seeing that his Church is unable to answer the pure facts of economy (November, 1964).

It is not for nothing that the present Pope always stands up for his former chief Pius XII. When Pope Paul was still Monsignor Giovanni Battista Montini, a certain Don Angelo Alberti wrote a book about the Message of the Gospels (*Il Messaggio degli Evangelii*, 1956); the future Pope not only recommended this stark anti-semitic pamphlet but even wrote its introduction.

The American producer of Hochhuth's *Representative*, Herman Shumlin, wrote a letter, dated July 18th, 1964 to Pope Paul demanding a declaration whether he still subscribes to the contents of the book, and quoting paragraphs that recall the anti-Jewish outpourings of Goebbels and Co. (*The Churchman*, October, 1964).

This incident may throw some light on the Pope's attitude in rejecting the recommendation of the progressive wing of the Vatican Council to clear the Jews of the ludicrous charge of deicide.

AMERICAN FREETHOUGHT EDITOR RETIRES

The *Liberal*, a monthly freethought magazine published by the Friendship Liberal League of Philadelphia, is now in its nineteenth year, and has been edited almost since its inception by K. M. Whitten. Now Mr. Whitten regretfully—and regrettably—has announced his retirement due to ill health. He will be 80 next birthday and has been told that he must relax and avoid tensions that might aggravate high blood pressure.

Mr. Whitten's editorship of the paper has, he says, "been a labour of love for a cause". It has also been a valuable service to that cause, and we hope with him that his successors will carry on the work as heretofore. We hope too that he will enjoy a happy retirement. Perhaps *Liberal* readers will still be able to enjoy occasional contributions from its capable and well-loved editor emeritus.

WITHOUT COMMENT

He [the Pope] said that the regimes of "atheist and totalitarian" countries were trying to supplant the Church's teachings to young people with Marxist doctrine. There the Church still lived today "in catacombs" as in ancient times.

"The object of the Church then and today in resisting is identical, to defend the truth and simultaneously to reassert the sacred right of every man to his own responsible freedom above all: the basic field of conscience and religion.

"The intention of the ancient and modern persecutors is identical. With physical violence and the weight of a legal, judicial or administrative apparatus they seek to impose 'their truth' and suffocate all contrary expressions of thought".

The Church was trying to resist Marxist suppression of individual rights "not only in defence of its own existence and rights but also in defence of human freedom and dignity".

—Daily Telegraph, (13/9/65)

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Notices for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER Publishing Office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.
Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (New Victoria Hotel, Corporation Street), Sunday, October 3rd, 6.45 p.m.; Open meeting.

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group (Regency House, Oriental Place), Sunday, October 3rd, 5.30 p.m.: Mr. and Mrs. Sandground, "Impressions of Israel and Reflections on Jewry".

Manchester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, October 3rd, 6.30 p.m.: F. J. CORINA, "God and the Politicians".

North Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, W.C.1), Sunday, October 3rd, 11 a.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM, "The Role of the Churches Today and Tomorrow". Tuesday, October 5th, 7.30 p.m.: ERIC HILLS, "An Enquiry into Intelligence and Opinion".

Notes and News

POPE PAUL'S "vague new proposals for a synod of bishops" looks to one Roman Catholic "like a characteristic Montini compromise". With a majority in the Vatican Council in favour of sweeping changes, and a majority in the Curia for the *status quo*, the way the Pope swings should be decisive. "But he cannot make up his mind", said Paul Johnson, editor of the *New Statesman* (17/9/65). The Pope is, as his predecessor said, a Hamlet; "he seems to think that he can chat up both sides into a viable compromise". And Mr. Johnson thought it odd that "a man who claims infallibility should be so reluctant to exercise the hand hesitates to reach for the hot-line to the Holy Ghost". The big question to be answered was: should the Church be controlled by a tightly-organised, self-perpetuating bureaucratic oligarchy in the Vatican . . . by the hundreds of millions of people, of all races, to compose it?" Logically, Mr. Johnson said, the Council should end by setting up "a permanent, proportionately-affected body, to act as the parliament of a world church". Logically, perhaps!

★

THE conservative minority was soon active at the Council. The first week saw "a full-scale attack on the decree on religious liberty"; and it was almost certain—according to the *Observer* (19/9/65)—that the declaration absolving the Jews of the guilt of the crucifixion had been "watered down". The progressive American Cardinal Ritter might

recognise that "separated brethren" sometimes suffer in Catholic countries and urge approval of the scheme on religious liberty, and even Cardinal Heenan consider it absurd to talk of error not having rights; others were unrepentant. "Undue kindness for false religion must not be shown," said a Chilean Archbishop—speaking in the name of 45 Latin American bishops—"there is only one true religion".

★

APPROPRIATELY, however, the strongest opposition came from Cardinal Ottaviani. Truth and falsehood could not be given equal value he declared. Nothing had been said here about Christ's frequent threats of eternal damnation and special care must be taken to protect the poor and unlettered from untruths. The decree on religious liberty was "a controversial document and it seemed to have been understood that controversial themes were to be avoided in this Council" (*The Guardian*, 18/9/65). This prompted Father John Courtney Murray to exclaim that progress had been made. A year ago Cardinal Ottaviani "would not have admitted that the theme was even controversial". And when the vote came on September 22nd, it showed 1,997 for the decree and only 224 against.

★

JOHN GRIGG is almost always stimulating, whether one agrees with him or not, and he is never afraid of a delicate subject. His *Guardian* article on September 20th, rightly called the Government's White Paper on immigration the "product of funk". Labour politicians are—as he said—"much less worried about the number of new inhabitants the country is gaining than about the number of votes they (the politicians) have been losing". And Protestant Christians from the West Indies and elsewhere must feel rather bitter, he continued, when they hear it said that coloured immigrants are changing the traditional character of our society. "Little attention seems to be paid to the change in traditional English values resulting from the uncontrolled immigration of Roman Catholics from the Republic of Ireland. Englishmen, it appears, are keener to defend their pigmentation than their principles".

★

"How Heathen is England?" asked the *Sunday Times* (19/9/65) and set out to answer on the basis of a Gallup Poll. It found the survey full of paradoxes; attitudes confused and inconsistent. All but 6 per cent hung denominational labels on themselves: 67 per cent said they were Church of England, 13 per cent Non-conformist and 9 per cent Roman Catholic. But church "membership" doesn't mean church attendance, and only 10 per cent go to church on an average Sunday. Roman Catholics are, of course, the most frequent churchgoers, and 50 per cent of them claimed to go to church "most Sundays"—defined by Gallup as two or more Sundays a month. "Yet when interviewers asked people to list what they in fact did last Sunday, only 23 per cent of Catholics mentioned going to church, and the figures for Anglicans (7 per cent) and Non-conformists (20 per cent) were also cut".

★

To judge from the present Humanist campaign, said the *Sunday Times*, "one would imagine there was significant opposition to religious teaching in state schools". But there was not. Only 4 per cent of those interviewed in the Gallup Poll believe that schools should not give any religious or scripture instruction to children. Even among "the very small minority of people in England" (the 6 per cent) "who say they belong to no Christian denomination, no more than one in five is against all religious education in schools".

The Superman

By PETER BULLOUGH

A "committee meeting" is to be held in Heaven, and the background to the "room" is a "void" with the exception of a large clock marked in centuries from zero to sixty, the single clock finger being set at the twenty-first century.

The Chairman, dressed in a white coat buttoned up at the neck is quietly dozing in his chair, giving a slight shiver from time to time. At his right hand Lucretius is sitting and snoring gently. Next to Lucretius is Socrates, bending over a manuscript, and with a blanket wrapped closely round his shoulders.

At the Chairman's left hand sits Adam, young and beardless and wearing an animal skin. He is idly whittling away at a piece of wood, the splinters of which are scattering over the table. Next to Adam is his wife Eve, dressed in modern (20th century) style, smoking a cigarette with obvious enjoyment, and reading a magazine.

The only sound that is heard for a period of ten seconds or so is the intermittent snoring, and the ticking of the clock. Suddenly an alarm bell rings and the Chairman awakes with a start, looks at the clock, jumps up and rushes to the "void", into which he shouts as loudly as his lungs will allow. "One moment if you please, I'm afraid we're not quite ready for you: I'll give you a call when we are. Sorry to keep you waiting". So saying, the Chairman hurries back to his seat.

"Gentlemen! I beg your pardon, lady and gentlemen".

"Thanks for the compliment", says Eve, glancing at Adam reminiscently.

"I don't consider being called a gentleman is much of a compliment", says Adam. "In fact I've spent the last fifty centuries trying to find out what a gentleman really is, without much success I'm afraid. I don't know if any of the products of my 'wild oats' sitting here with me have anything further to add to the subject matter".

"A gentleman is like a superman. He's a delusion that exists only in the mind of the person who professes to be one", says Socrates, carrying on with writing, and drawing his blanket closer around his shoulders. "I wish to hell someone would turn on some heat in this place. I've half a mind to go back 'downstairs', it was at least warm enough to work down there. . . Where did I put that application form?"

"Delusion! Did you say delusion?", says Lucretius, talking in his sleep. "Complete and utter balderdash old chap. How can a judgment be a delusion if it really and truly *exists*, if only in the mind of the person concerned. Haven't you been following young Kant lately? Just common and very elementary logic you old ignoramus!"

"Who the hell are you calling old! I'm a darn sight younger than you are", replies Socrates, throwing down his quill.

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen! Enough of this aggression: please remember where you are", says the Chairman. "Let us not argue among ourselves. We are here to conduct the interview of a new applicant, not to destroy each other".

"Why don't you shut up and sit down, you old wind-bag" replies Socrates. "You ought to know us well enough by now to know that we're only teasing each other in order to help break the monotony of this place. That's the trouble with being philosophers; everybody expects us to be the very essence of sobriety and completely devoid of human characteristics of any kind. We're just flesh

and blood like everybody else; no more supermen than the next bloke".

"Yes! Yes! Quite so! declares the Chairman pompously. "I do so agree with you. I think that you will agree to us having far more important matters to deal with at this moment however".

"Agree be damned!" says Lucretius, waking up.

"Tch! Tch! Remember where you are dear child. Please have a little consideration for our poor chairman's ulcers", breaks in Eve, still reading.

Lucretius, ignoring the interruption: "As I was saying before being rudely interrupted by my 'very great Mater' here: Agree be damned! I don't agree with you any more than Socrates does. In fact I can't for the life of me see any point in this 'selection procedure' (or whatever it is you call it). Why can't we just let the new applicants decide for themselves instead of trying to judge them. Human beings aren't meant to be prodded, probed, and 'pigeon-holed' any more than a base animal".

Socrates, mischievously: "But the human being is an animal, old fruit! You remember cousin Aristotle, and the foundations of 'natural selective evolution' surely, don't you: you ought you know: you yourself added an important point or two".

"Why don't you take a little fly around outside", retorts Lucretius. "Do you good to get some of that surplus fat off you". Turning to the Chairman. "As I was saying: a human being is far too complex a creature to be subjected to judgment by anyone here: we are not equal to the task. The only person among us who enjoys these inane proceedings is you yourself so far as I can see. Wouldn't be so bad if we could have someone to interview us for a change. I could do with a bit of wind in my ego. Perhaps we shall really have the pleasure of meeting a real superman one day; who knows?" (reflects) "Come to think of it, I don't believe it's possible to improve on the old chairman we had before you took over. Pity he had to leave so suddenly. Never mind!" Bored with the proceedings, Lucretius nods off.

Socrates, also bored, returns to his writing. Adam starts on a new piece of wood.

The Chairman again, rises to his feet, takes a deep breath, and announces: "The superman for whom you have been waiting so patiently has arrived lady and gentlemen. He is here this very minute, waiting in the void. Let me read his qualifications: James Solobaid, world citizen No. 2, philosopher. All honours and degrees available to mankind. Parentage: — product of Artificial Insemination. Gentlemen, the great day has arrived! Let us waste no more time before we summon this superman into our presence".

"I'm not in the least impressed", says Socrates cynically. "We've had such individuals here before and not one of them has turned out to be much different to the rest".

"But don't you see that this man is different from the rest. He has the paramount advantage of not having inherited the emotional characteristics that are an essential part of the process of 'direct insemination'; he must be free of all emotions, and in consequence, possess the very highest of intellects. In such a man as this, whose thought is the product of pure reason without emotional bias of any description, surely lies the qualities of a superman".

"Can't see what difference emotion makes", says Adam. "Whoever he is, he's still only one of my sons when all's

said an done; and although each of them is different I wouldn't go so far as to say that *one* is so much more intelligent than the others. To the extent of my experience—for what it's worth—I would agree with young Socrates that the idea of a superman is a delusion. To me the question is concerned only with 'human relativity' and we shouldn't be concerned here with mortal business. Perhaps my dear wife will agree with me in this?" (turning to Eve).

"The whole idea of artificial insemination is repugnant to the mind of any woman. Good God! What next! The most important thing in a woman's life is emotion: take that away from her and the only thing she will produce is a moron not a superman. A woman wants a child she can love and possess, not a computing machine that will make her rack her brains in order to try to understand its every thought and word".

"Well said, old girl! I agree with you", shouts Socrates.

The Tale of the Terrapins

By D. L. HUMPHRIES

(Australia)

A FEW years ago my brother decided to keep terrapins as pets. But this proved to be easier said than done, for the long-necked variety chosen turned out to be quite energetic creatures, and were continually trying to escape from their enclosed garden pool. It was a common occurrence for members of the family to enter the side gate and encounter an escaping terrapin face to foot. The anger of the reptile at thus having its escape thwarted was only too apparent.

Since it appeared that the wooden wall surrounding the pool was inadequate, we substituted one of a diamond wire mesh 2ft. 6in. high. However, the terrapins still managed to escape, although how they did so is a mystery. Our address was painted on the shell of each animal, and one was subsequently returned by a neighbour.

But this story does not concern the terrapins which escaped, but the ones that did not. My brother usually had only one terrapin at a time, replacing it with another when it escaped. Between escape attempts the terrapin would refuse to eat, and lie sluggishly near the surface of the water. In the case of two successive terrapins there came a time when they appeared quite dead, and even began to smell. So they were buried. Now the queer part is, that although they were buried in the same spot, and about a foot or so from the surface, when my brother went to dig them up again—"to get the shell"—he found that both had completely disappeared! He is certain that both animals were dead on burial, that this was the exact spot of interment, that the ground showed no signs of disturbance due to escape or removal, and that it was unlikely that anyone saw him bury them. We have all sworn that we did not remove the bodies and that no one else could have done so. The only possible explanation is that the two terrapins have risen from the dead! The evidence is so clear and overwhelming. Consequently it behoves us to go forth into the world and teach what the terrapin taught us to all the other terrapins in order that they might achieve salvation. Terra firma shall become terrapin, and all the world turn turtle! Possibly, other reptiles such as snakes, lizards and crocodiles might be beneficiaries of the gospel also. We can but try!

PS: It has subsequently come to my attention that certain presumptuous Christians have cast doubts upon my interpretation of the events. They have a

"Who wants a perfect human calculating machine anyway?"

Lucretius, jumping up and thumping the table violently: "Nonsense!! Whoever heard of a *perfect* calculating machine of any day or age, human or otherwise? The idea is as ludicrous as Grandma Eve's perfect emotional man. I vote we ask our esteemed Chairman to request the presence of our friend out there".

The Chairman breathing a huge sigh of relief, leaps to the void and shouts "Mr. Solobaid! You may come in now if you will".

To the roll of drums and clash of cymbals enters the devil with a flourish, complete with horns and black cape.

Socrates: "Well, blow me down if it isn't the old chairman back again. Welcome home old chap! Good to have you back!" (turning to Adam) "Get the cards out Granddad, I've thought of a new game: its called "Find the superman".

different version. Wretched creatures! They claim that there is a perfectly "natural" explanation—yet they are unwilling to attribute the same to their own resurrection story! They assert that terrapins can hibernate, and that under these circumstances the vital processes slow down, so that one could easily think the creatures were dead. Also, that this species is capable of giving off an offensive smell which my brother had mistakenly attributed to decaying of the flesh.

Hence, when they were buried, they awoke, struggled to the surface, and made off. A few showers of rain smoothed over the ground so that all appeared to be as before. What nonsense this is!

How could two terrapins, so obviously dead, weakened through lack of food, and buried a foot or so from the surface, how could they possibly struggle out and walk away?

No, it is a great mystery, and such feeble suggestions are quite absurd.

CORRESPONDENCE

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Christmas, as the traders will very soon be telling us, is not very far off, and the annual problem of the Freethinker will arise—how to reciprocate the greetings that cascade in from one's friends, without recognising the religious ingredient of the holiday! True, cards are on sale in plenty which don't carry variations on the "Star, three Kings, luminous mother and child" theme. But every card that I received last year had the word "Christmas" in it somewhere, thus seeming to recognise the Christian festival with which the holiday coincides. Is there, then, anywhere in Britain where one may buy cards which simply exhort one's family and friends to have a good holiday—for its own sake! Such cards, especially if the proceeds were donated to the appeal for Spanish political prisoners, would be greatly in demand by Freethinkers, and nobody could accuse "even us" of cashing in on Christmas.

R. G. CALDWELL.

[While not sharing Mr. Caldwell's abhorrence of the word Christmas (does he worry about using the pagan-derived Easter?) we know that he expresses a common feeling among Freethinkers. Can readers help him?—Ed.]

RIDICULE AND LOGIC

"God on the Doorstep" (THE FREETHINKER 10/9/65) was an excellent piece of gentle humour replete with spiky barbs. More of this style together with a positive promotion of secular thought in scientific and sociological matters is needed.

The ridiculing of religion and the propagation of secularism in various fields should be the twin pillars of THE FREETHINKER'S policy. Gentle (and not so gentle) humour, deflating barbs and pointed bantering of religionists' cherished beliefs, tenets and dogmas would serve more our purpose of disposing with the atrophying remnants of religion than does the rabid ranting

and fulminating confrontation of which we read so much in the columns of THE FREETHINKER. Nothing belittles so much as ridicule, especially ridicule of age-old beliefs. And if in so doing we run the risk of falling foul of anarchistic blasphemy laws so much the better. It is high time they were challenged, as they are being in Sweden, in West Germany, in Denmark by our counterparts.

There is still this tendency to polemicise with religionists which finds favour with THE FREETHINKER and this predilection for writing on religion and all its concomitants, so absurd and meaningless to sane and rational readers.

Secularism in the fields of education, sociology, psychology, medicine and cosmology (a welcome step from F. A. Ridley's review in THE FREETHINKER 10/9/65 is perhaps an augur?) should fill the pages coupled with the satirical send-up and the ludicrous let-down of religion and religionists.

After all, we will never convince foolish fanciers of the unreality of their supernatural delusions by logical controversy, any more than reasoning with a psychopath will cure him.

B. J. CLIFTON.

[Not all believers are impervious to logic: it leads some of them to freethought. The role of ridicule in combating religion is real but, we suggest, limited. And there has only been one Voltaire—ED].

CATHOLIC-HUMANIST DIALOGUE

"Dismay" (Notes and News, 10/9/65) was exactly the right word to use in connection with the proposed so-called "Dialogue" between representatives of the IHEU and the Roman Catholic Secretariat for Unbelievers. It is indeed a sad thought that British Humanists should, in effect, lend themselves to the assistance of this arrogant power which has been the bane of Europe and a persistent bar to progress for centuries.

This latest move on the part of the Vatican is of course an effort to stifle criticism, silence the enemy, and emerge triumphant. The old game of "divide and rule". It is a matter of life and death to them, because Freethought and Secular Humanism constitute the most deadly danger which the Roman Church faces today, and it is an effort to arrest the defections and lapses consequent upon the flow of enlightened propaganda away from the supernatural which has really caused the Vatican approach to the International Humanist and Ethical Union.

The Pope's latest encyclical proclaims that these people, who still persist in the ancient cannibalistic practice of eating their god, are not far removed from the magician-priests of the very oldest civilisations, and have nothing in common with Humanism and Freethought. Besides, the hierarchy has been consistently outspoken in its condemnation of Atheists, Rationalists and Humanists, well realising that in a world of increasing scientific knowledge and educational facilities it is on the losing side in the battle for men's minds. The only possible way to deal with Rome is to keep up the momentum of secular propaganda and continuous pressure at every point. This is what it fears most.

Just when the tide is turning in favour of Secularism it ill becomes Humanists to rock the boat. One begins to wonder if the late Victor Purcell's speculations had some foundation in fact. Or are members of the IHEU just nice simple people who believe all the Catholic advertisements?

ELIZABETH COLLINS.

AN AGNOSTIC APOLOGY

In his article "Reply to an Agnostic" (THE FREETHINKER 10/9/65) Mr. Gonzalo Quiogue takes upon himself to pour the usual dirty water upon the heads of those Freethinkers who call themselves Agnostics—as they have every right to do, and as the great and courageous T. H. Huxley did before them. Mr. Quiogue may take note of this fact in any future criticism he may fling at the "sheep-like" Agnostic, to use his own abusive phrase. After the usual Atheistic platitudes he informs his readers that the Atheist is not required to give reasons for his atheism—which is not reason as he imagines, but sheer conceit. The Theist is perfectly justified in requiring from the Atheist a logical reason for his atheism, but this is a point that intellectual conceit cannot swallow.

In his arrogance Mr. Quiogue creates his own cloud-cuckoo land, where reason and words have no meaning. For if he is exempted from giving reasons for his atheism then how can he reason at all.

Then he belabours the poor Agnostic in such beautiful language such as "sheep-like", "fence sitters" and "shirkers" and so on, in a tone only worthy of a certain type of Christian who can only answer his opponent with abuse. His freethought appears to have "improved" his bad manners but not his reason of which he is so proud. Like himself the Agnostic does not accept the

Christian concept of a benevolent Deity, but outside this, he neither denies nor affirms the existence of a non-human super-power outside the universe. After thirty years of reading and thinking on these topics I say with the great nineteenth-century philosopher Herbert Spencer we do not know—because we cannot know. This is within human limits and therefore reasonable. And may I remind Mr. Quiogue that freethought is an attitude towards life where both the Atheist and the Agnostic can find room for each other's respective view points, for both seek for truth—if truth can be found.

E. MARKLEY

OBITUARY

Gerda Fehl who died in Paddington General Hospital, London, on September 14th, was born in Austria and came to this country in 1938. She read widely, like her companion the late Walter Carlton, with whom she regularly attended Freethought meetings until her health broke down several years ago.

Members of the National Secular Society (of which Gerda Fehl was an Honorary Life Member) and other friends attended the committal ceremony conducted by Mr. W. McIlroy, General Secretary of the Society, at West London Crematorium on September 18th.

Books of Interest

- Ten Non-Commandments *Ronald Fletcher* 2s. 6d. postage 5d.
 The Thinkers Handbook *Hector Hawton* 5s. postage 8d.
 The Humanist Revolution *Hector Hawton* 10s. 6d. postage 8d.
 Pioneers of Social Change *Royston Pike* 15s. postage 10d.
 The Origins of Religion *Lord Raglan* 2s. 6d. postage 6d.
 Man and His Gods *Homer Smith* 13s. 6d. postage 10d.
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 An Analysis of Christian Origins *Georges Ory* 2s. 6d. postage 5d.
 Rome or Reason? *R. G. Ingersoll* 1s. postage 5d.
 The Realm of Ghosts *Eric Maple* 21s. postage 1s. 3d.
 Evolution of the Papacy *F. A. Ridley* 1s. postage 5d.
 Freedom's Foe—The Vatican *Adrian Pigott* 3s. postage 6d.
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 Catholic Action *Adrian Pigott* 6d. postage 3d.
 The Bible Handbook *G. W. Foote & W. P. Ball* 5s. postage 8d.
 The Dark World of Witches *Eric Maple* 3s. 6d. postage 5d.
 Morals Without Religion *Margaret Knight* 10s. 6d. postage 8d.
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 The New Reformation *John T. Robinson* 6s. postage 6d.
 The Honest to God Debate *John T. Robinson & David C. Edwards* 6s. postage 8d.
 Objections to Christian Belief *Various authors* 12s. 6d. postage 8d.
 Objections to Humanism *Various authors* 16s. postage 8d.
 The Bradlaugh Case *Walter L. Arnstein* 50s. postage 1s. 6d.
 Bertrand Russell The Passionate Sceptic *Alan Wood* 8s. 6d. postage 8d.
 Sceptical Essays *Bertrand Russell* 6s. postage 6d.
 Humanist Essays *Gilbert Murray* 7s. 6d. postage 8d.
 Life of Jesus *Ernest Renan* 2s. 6d. postage 5d.
 The Freethinker bound volume 1964 30s. postage 2s.
 All Things New *Ann Biezanek* 3s. 6d. postage 5d.
 The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists *Robert Tressell* 7s. 6d. postage 10d.
 The World's Living Religions *Geoffrey Parrinder* 2s. 6d. postage 6d.
 117 Days *Ruth First* 3s. 6d. postage 5d.
 Has Man a Future? *Bertrand Russell* 2s. 6d. postage 5d.
 Crimes of the Popes 6d. postage 3d.
 Frauds, Forgeries and Relics 9d. postage 3d.
 Handbook of Citizens Rights *N.C.C.L.* 2s. 6d. postage 5d.
 from THE FREETHINKER Bookshop
 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

Details of membership of the National Secular Society and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Telephone: HOP 2717.

The Freethinker

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His Holiness Pope Paul VI graciously accepts the invitation to take his turn as world peace-maker. Is this, one wonders, an act of penance or of patronage? Has he undertaken the trip to New York as the august Representative of the Prince of Peace—or is this an inverted Canossa in expiation of long-term papal policies largely responsible for the mess the world is in?

Admittedly the patronising attitude was more in evidence on the last occasion of world showmanship—the jaunt to India in person. The spectacle of Great White Father moving with majestic pity among the swarms of under-privileged darker brethren was touching indeed, and the noble largesse flung to them from the papal coffers brought a lump to one's throat. At the same time one couldn't help reflecting on that obstinate determination to keep the swarms swarming, which somewhat lessens the dramatic impact of Great White Father as a fervent Indophile.

Maybe he is just too innocent to see the connection between swarms and starvation, exploding populations and exploding bombs. From this rarefied sphere of spiritual awareness he may even perceive a Mighty Purpose where we earthgrubbers merely see one hell of a mess. But with all due reverence for whatever goes on beneath the white skull-cap and the triple tiara, the overall picture of Paul's journeyings up-to-date would seem to bear the same sort of sainted futility that bored us to death—or goaded us to irritation—in the scripture classes of our youth.

Auschwitz

No, there was nothing of penance—or remorse—in the trip to India. Nothing that showed, anyway. It's possible, of course, that underneath the papal paraphernalia there may throb the heart of a real human being. Paul's private thoughts and emotions may differ from Peter's. But this we are not permitted to know. Only the papal confessor could probe behind the persona. The Headman's mask must never come off: the show must go on.

But—this present venture into the scrum of reality? One can jeer at its futility or sneer at its hypocrisy, resent U Thant's well-meant gesture or shrug it aside with contempt. But papal displays have subliminal effects that have to be reckoned with, like those of the "telly" or any other advertising colossus. Apart from mob-hysteria of the fawning faithful, a phenomenon, alas, that is always with us, one can visualise deeper cracks in the contacted surfaces of humanity. Even chasms.

Before the benign advance of the Apostle of Peace, what depths of bitterness may be uncovered in certain memories? Those, for instance, that are stamped indelibly with images of dear ones torn from their homes, driven to death-camps, herded to the gas-chambers and crematorium ovens? With the knowledge evermore behind the memory, that this Grand Guignol of human agony was first set in motion by a Roman Catholic prelate, a chosen and trusted representative of the Papacy. Could such minds ever forget

that it was Mgr. Tiso, created Chief of the Slovak State in 1939, who sent the first-ever batch of Jews to Auschwitz? This signal honour of being "sent" by the Church did not cover these poor victims with the Church's cloak of mercy. "In 1941, at Auschwitz, the first contingent of Jews arrived from Slovakia and High Silesia, and those who were not capable of working were immediately sent to the gas-chambers in one of the rooms of the building which housed the crematorial ovens".¹

Other memories of this holy Apostle of Auschwitz may crowd in, re-opening old wounds. His enjoyment of the favour, esteem and support of Pope Pius XII, whose dream (the world's nightmare) he so ardently shared: the inimit-

able words in which he expressed the reality at the heart of the dream: "Catholicism and Nazism have much in common, and they work hand in hand to reform the world".² The voice of Radio Vatican in June 1940: "The declaration of Mgr. Tiso, asserting his intention to set up Slovakia according to a Christian plan, is greatly appreciated by the Holy See"³—the holy Christian plan which included sending Protestants as well as Jews to the death-camps. And any grim consolation in the thought that this first supplier to the ovens of Auschwitz paid for his dream at the end of a rope in 1946, must be tempered by the rankling reminder that he was one of the few, the preposterously few, whose ghastly crimes were not washed in the Blood of the Lamb, that is, concealed beneath the white robe of Peter.

Sons of St. Francis

Other abysses may open in other memories: of kindred burned alive or hacked to death in their Orthodox churches; of forced "conversions" to the Roman faith by the tens of thousands, "conversions" which by no means always saved the wretched "converts" from a horrible fate. Of nightmare figures in monastic or priestly garments, inciting their flocks to murder, torture, loot and massacre, often themselves leading the most barbarous expeditions. There may be old parishioners who remember the fervent exhortations of the Franciscan Brother Ante Klaritch, in a sermon preached in July 1941: "You have not yet killed a sigle Serb. You are nothing but old women who should be wearing skirts! If you are not all armed, take an axe or sickle, and whenever you meet a Serb, cut his throat".⁴

Some may still conjure up the grotesque image of another Franciscan, Brother Augustino Cievolta, who "to the great amazement of his fellow-citizens, was going about the streets, a revolver strapped to his habit, inviting the people to massacre the Orthodox Christians".⁵ And someone somewhere may shudder to recall "the Franciscan Brother, Miroslav Filipovitch, who went so far as to accept the role of executioner in the concentration camp of Jase-novac".⁶ The sons of the gentle Saint Francis were by no means the only members of the Church Militia so zealously involved in the bloodbath, but they do seem to have surpassed all their brethren of the Christian dovecot in the

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Leopard in a New Suit

By PHYLLIS K. GRAHAM

black arts of sadism and hate.

There may be some who weep still for the massacre of their (non-Roman) priests and bishops; some whose smouldering anger may flame again into execration of that monstrous key-figure in the holocaust of blood and terror, the Primate of the Roman Catholic Church in Yugoslavia. All the old buried wrath and anguish may surge again if the publicised peace-hunting Paul should, unwittingly, resurrect the ghost of the sly and sinister Stepinac. With all the Christian goodwill in the world it is hard to forget the papal plotter in his place of Zagreb, the centre of terrorist activities, basking in Vatican approval while his brother-in-Christ, the Orthodox Bishop of Zagreb, was beaten and tortured till he went mad; while his faithful Ustasish were adding to the lustre of the Church of Rome by dealing with such venerable schismatics as Bishop Platon, that octogenarian tortured in ways too horrible to imagine, before he was finished off with hatchet-blows and flung into the River Vrbanja. It is possible, too, that the ghosts of other monsters may rise again: that of Saritch, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Sarajevo, for example, a member of the Ustashi movement since 1934, who exalted "the use of revolutionary methods in the service of truth, justice and honour", and declared that "it is foolish and unworthy of the disciples of Christ to think that the battle against evil could ever be conducted in a noble manner, with gloves on"—and who nobly implemented these lofty sentiments by permitting the torture and death of his brother-in-Christ, the Orthodox Bishop of Sarajevo, whose throat was slit like a pig's.

As His Present Holiness floats earthwards in his 'plane, like Christ descending from the clouds of heaven, material (possibly sordid) meditations may occupy the minds of some who are not dazzled by this miracle of Christly condescension. Quite irrelevantly, of course, they may find themselves pondering what would seem to be one of the more stupendous miracles of Mammon: the fantastic world of finance represented by this suave Envoy of the Prince of Peace. For no one knows — outside the secrets of the Vatican — what masses of treasure found their way into the papal coffers during those years of the savaging of Europe. The elimination of the rightful owners accomplished, almost the entire property of the Orthodox Church in Nazi territories was seized and taken over by the Roman Catholic authorities. The Vicar of Christ, of stronger metal than Judas and quite unafflicted with scruples, never made any fuss about betraying the innocent or accepting the price of blood. Indeed, *could* the enemies of Holy Church be called innocent? As for the Jews — guilty of the blood of Christ they were manifestly criminal. Their property as well as their persons could therefore be disposed of with perfect equanimity. Thus, at the fall of the Nazi régime, the fleeing criminals (the Christian ones) were able to deposit their loot in the safe keeping of Holy Mother Church, who thereafter acted as their Banker while remaining their loving Protector.

A macabre but fascinating speculation (if one is not emotionally involved) is to wonder just how many gold teeth, wedding-rings, children's bracelets and ear-rings, and other pathetic human relics, went to swell the account at the Vatican. In consolidated stock, of course.

This could suggest another line of thought as we gaze — possibly on the world "telly-screen"? — at the reverent bowing and scraping of officials at the airport reception.

There are some who were sickened by their first sight of the death-camps in all their unvarnished horror at the liberation, and who were angry still because so many of the monsters responsible were allowed to escape retribution. Some of us who did not see are angry too, and we are in no

doubt as to where the blame lies. "There are laws for the punishment of those who conceal wrong-doers and help them to escape the investigations of the police; and above all there are laws to prevent the association of such wrong-doers and the preparation of crimes. But the Pope is above the law."⁸

Yes, indeed. The Papacy obeys some mystical law of divine charity far removed from our rough ideas of human justice. It is this, no doubt, which shows mercy to the one lost sheep while tranquilly ignoring the ninety-and-nine — or shall we put it at fifty-seven million, the estimated total of all who perished by the Nazi régime? It is this, assuredly, which covers with the seamless robe of papal peace such Christian champions as Ante Pavelitch, the Croatian Führer, and enables them to flee from the cruelties of human justice to the comfort of well-earned retirement under divine protection. I hope I shall be forgiven for this one last dip into the lurid pages of Europe's bloodiest patch of history. It offers such a splendid vision of papal magnanimity — and perhaps a highlight on the rather curious tastes of Pius XII in particular.

Pavelitch (with two political murders to his credit before the mass-exterminations got going) was a special protégé of Pastor Angelicus, who frequently sent him blessings and kindly messages, honoured him with audiences, supported him in action and succoured him in defeat. And no wonder, for this stout-hearted Catholic assassin showed the most apostolic zeal in running his country on Christian lines, just as the Holy Pontiff ardently wished it to be. If his methods seem to us somewhat rough and ready, that is because we are outsiders: we cannot penetrate the dark inner core of the Catholic mystique.

The Transalpine writer Curzio Malaparte supplies us with this glimpse into a world beyond our ken. As war correspondent of the *Corriere della Sera* he was granted an interview with Pavelitch. "The Croatian people want to be governed by kindness," proclaimed their Führer. "As he spoke," continues Malaparte, "I noticed there was a wicker basket on the desk . . . the lid was raised, and one could see that the basket was filled with what appeared to be oysters. Ante Pavelitch . . . showing me the molluscs . . . a mass of gluey and gelatinous oysters . . . told me, smiling his lethargic smile, 'This is a gift from my faithful Ustasish: twenty kilogrammes of human eyes.'"⁹

More credible in darkest Africa than in Christian Europe? No doubt, but it was common practice among the fervent Roman Catholic Ustasish to gouge out their victims' eyes, "which they wore as garlands or carried in bags, to be given away as mementos." Did any of these strange jewels find their way into the Papal treasure? Surely such a gift from his beloved Ante would have honoured and delighted Pope Pius XII, surnamed by some "The Inquisitor". . . .

But all this was twenty odd years ago. Haven't we forgiven and forgotten? Pius XII, the unpunished war criminal, lies

In the shroud of crimson
where the dead gods sleep —

and his successors — as yet — have come upon no Nazi-Fascist giants to harness with the Warriors of the Cross to the juggernaut of war.

The good Pope John, however, proved pretty zealous in maintaining the cold war, failing a hot one. Violent opposition was offered by the Vatican to the proposed summit conference between East and West, fixed for May 16th 1960. The horrible idea of Christians sitting at a table with Soviet atheists aroused the righteous wrath

(Concluded on page 326)

Secularism and Glamour

By KIT MOUAT

ONE DEFINITION of "glamour" refers to the value of the wrapping being more than that of the contents. It is easy, however, to scoff at showy or elaborate wrappings without having any idea as to the worth of the contents and so unjustly belittle them both. I believe that glamour ("magic" or "enchantment" as the Oxford Dictionary defines it) is something we Secularists can ill afford to ignore. Its superficial magnetism is too strong; its potential nourishment for the human appetites too important.

"Heaven forbid" (to borrow an expression) that I should ever take seriously anything that Malcolm Muggeridge says, but in a recent review of a book about Bradlaugh he wrote: "Atheists tend to be more solemn, righteous and basically respectable than believers." If this time he is right, it is a grey summing-up and not one I would want as an epitaph. The image of a sort of Quaker-Puritanism is unlikely to appeal to the young of 1965 or indeed anyone with a strong desire for aesthetic satisfaction, be it educated or uneducated.

We hear a lot today about the new label "Humanist" and its inferiority to the old "Rationalist" or "Secularist", and I have already said that I would probably have remained forever unlabelled if "Humanist" had not been coined. I would prefer "Hellenist", but, not being a scholar, cannot claim it. "Epicurean" has always attracted me, but sounds masculine through and through. And so I call myself a "Humanist", qualified by "secularist" or "atheist" as others with more justification use "scientific". If anyone wants to try and prove that I am, as a result, more "religious" than the "Rationalists", so be it. In the meantime I consider the matter of glamour.

We may deplore all that is tawdry in the Roman Catholic trappings as far as the eye is concerned, but who can deny the "enchantment" of plain-song (or for that matter of a Russian Orthodox choir at its best)? We may dislike the triviality of Protestant hymn music and disapprove of the sentiments expressed, but who can remain unmoved by the sight of light shining through a medieval stained-glass window? Surely we no longer need be afraid of those who would try to prove that we have a hidden craving for a religious faith just because our ears and eyes can appreciate the "enchantment" that is sometimes part of religion? I for one can appreciate a well-designed chocolate box even though chocolates make me sick. Once you have seen the desperate poverty in some European cities, it is not hard to understand why the mass provides such a necessary ingredient in life for those who do not otherwise experience peace or beauty. We must get rid of the poverty, but I believe Secularists (who would also get rid of the faith) must be the first to realise that we also have to replace or provide beauty.

We have a much better message than any Christian or Jew, Muslim or Hindu, and this is primarily what we have to get across; but the world is getting uglier as populations increase, and far too many of us need to escape from the concrete jungles of cities or suburbs. If we are not careful, people will not even realise their need for beauty, as I believe they are mostly unaware today of their need for facts and truths instead of superstition. So long as the Churches provide the glamour, there will be people enough who do not care about the contents.

I was thinking along these lines while waiting for the curtain to go up on Marlene Dietrich; and then it did, and there she was, incredible in her absurdly exaggerated furs

and spangles, her blonde hair denying her grandmotherly status. She was even more enchanting than I had imagined from her films and records. With her reinforced-concrete voice she crooned the most trivial of songs and had her audience groping for their handkerchiefs. That's what we need, I thought. Marlene Dietrich in the freethought movement. My knowledge of German is slight, but her Berliner accent immediately reminded me of that splendid sense of humour and its Cockney irreverence. I remembered how as a student Marlene Dietrich had had to get out of her country in the thirties, and how she had been booed for her "treachery" on a recent return visit to West Germany.

And when I die

Don't tell the preacher

To sing of my glory or my fame . . . Just

See what the boys in the back room will have . . .

she sang and the audience cheered. A man near me in the gallery was on his feet, drumming his heels and shouting. We joined in, and then Miss Dietrich was singing a love song. "I'll give you bluebirds . . ." or something equally square, shoddy and unmusical; but, she had explained, this was a love song for a child, and it immediately became charming. That's what we need, I thought, more love songs for children.

The songs from the *Blue Angel* (a film which for me was not made any less horrible by the famous legs) were cheered, and again Our Man in the Gallery was on his feet. This time Miss Dietrich seemed to spot him, for she waved back, a wide, uninhibited "saying-hello-to-a-liner-about-to-dock" wave. And then a complete change to a song in French; a letter from a man in prison to his girl. Perhaps it was not as socially significant as some of the songs sung by Joan Baez, but she could still dampen the eyes of her audience. Unlike Joan Baez, who sings in a plain dress, without make-up and accompanied simply by her own guitar, Marlene Dietrich managed to conjure up the prison in spite of her glittering, low-cut gown and a second-rate orchestra. Her own humanity was winning, and somewhere there was a lot of love within the glamour; a lot of real beauty inside the sequins and furs.

When Marlene Dietrich was stranded on a Desert Island with her eight "discs" she explained to Roy Plomley that she had no religion and wasn't worried. She was humble in her fame, touching in her admiration for other artists, and confident. This film-star (how old-fashioned that sounds!), great, established professional of the stage and entertainment world, renowned for her glamour rather than for any world-shaking talent in music or acting, is (if unlabelled) one of us. And is there any label that could possibly fit such a woman?

Marlene Dietrich gave me a lot to think about. I couldn't quite see her fighting battles for secularism except as an individual woman to whom anything less than honesty would be unthinkable. I couldn't see her calling herself a "Rationalist" (with those legs?) or even a "Humanist", and yet she gives the impression of someone in whom the heart and reason are happily wed. I would like to suggest that she is the essence of femininity, with her warm-hearted and uninhibited tributes to love, but I would be deceiving myself. Men can love and deal with the subject as unflinchingly as women. One thing is certain, she understands the emotional needs of human beings from the cradle to the beer-cellar, or the Wild West

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This Believing World

IN THE article "Battle of Britain ace flies again" by Dave Lanning (*TV Times*, 16/9/65), there is nothing about God Jesus or religion; which rather goes to show that they didn't play much part in the victory—or anything else. However, this unaccountable omission, we are glad to say, was rectified in the commemorative service on September 19th in Westminster Abbey in the presence of the Queen and Prince Philip, when God was suitably thanked with the singing of "O God our help in ages past".

★

WE HAVE never been able to see what the Almighty did during the Battle of Britain—or for that matter what exactly he did in any battle. The only battles in which we are assured he ever took a hand were those so graphically described in the Old Testament; though here again we find the horrid hand of infidelity creeping in with the modern belief that all these terrific conflicts never took place. Still, God has to be thanked somehow or somewhere, even if he never did a thing.

★

IN THE *Radio Times* (16/9/65), there is an article on the important subject of "Education and Broadcasting" by the Minister of Education, the Rt. Hon. Anthony Crosland, MP and, strange to say, again there is not a word on Jesus or his religion and the absolute necessity of Bible lessons. Surely Mr. Crosland does not negate the value of religious periods every day? What would Lord Reith say about it?

★

BUT even Raymond Postgate, who is BBC Controller of Educational Broadcasting, writing in the same number of the *Radio Times* on "Back to School" with "Something for Everyone", appears to have forgotten all about religion. He mentions a number of subjects like "French for Beginners" and "Discovery and Experience", but not a word about religion. Surely it is not being suggested that "French for Beginners" has more educational value than the miracles of Jesus?

★

WE always, when we can, read the London *Evening News'* pet theologian's "Saturday Reflection" and the latest (11/9/65) gem is that Paul is "outstanding among the great letter-writers of the world". The one thing which characterises the greater part of his "letters" is that few people can understand them; and successive Bible translators have had more or less to apologise for not being able to make them intelligible to ordinary readers. Even then, Paul's violent tirades against women are among the things which Christians have never been happy about. The cry, in fact, is in general—"not Paul but Jesus".

★

SO GOD Almighty—or perhaps we ought to say the God Almighty of millions of Negroes, Father Divine—has died at last! This very important event appears not to have even raised an eyebrow among white people. Yet lots of his followers really believed that when he was hauled once before a New York court, and convicted of being a nuisance, the apparently healthy judge was made to die of a heart attack four days later (*The Observer*, 12/9/65). And as his followers would tell you, only a genuine God could do that.

★

THE Christian God has many mansions in Heaven: God Divine had twelve restaurants, eight barber's shops, and many other businesses, and even had a heaven in Switzerland and Australia. Moreover, his wife was a "virgin"—white of course—and before him, there was no drinking

(so unlike Jesus) or swearing. But like Jesus his followers refuse to believe he is dead. Perhaps we shall soon have a Gospel according to his most holy disciple.

★

THE Methodist Press Office might deny their dissenters' claim of 50 per cent support from all Methodists. But as a precautionary measure no doubt—the Rev. Gordon A. Maland, Chairman of the North Lancashire district, has ruled that no public meetings opposing the decisions of the Methodist Conference could be held on Church premises (*The Sunday Times*, 26/9/65). And the *Methodist Recorder* has banned the dissenters from advertising in its columns. All for unity with the Anglicans!

JESUIT GENERAL DECLARES WAR ON ATHEISM

LAST summer, Pope Paul gave the Jesuits a mandate to wage war against atheism "with fresh ardour". Even so, bishops and other members of the Society of Jesus—not to mention those Humanists who look forward to a resumption of their dialogue with the Catholics—were "startled" by the militancy of Father Pedro Arrupe's speech at the Vatican Council on September 27th.

Atheism, the Society's General told the bishops, crosses the ramparts of God, insidiously influencing the minds of believers, including even friars and priests with its hidden poison, which spreads in the Church as "naturalism, distrust and rebellion" (*The Guardian*, 28/9/65). "This new godless society", said Father Arrupe, "operates in an extremely efficient manner, at least in its higher levels of leadership. It makes use of every possible means at its disposal, be they scientific, technical, social, or economic. It follows a perfectly mapped out strategy. It holds almost complete sway in international organisations, in financial circles, in the field of mass communications, press, cinema, radio and television". Which is quite a compliment, coming from the Black Pope.

The General pointed out that after two thousand years, Christians make up only a small fraction of the world's population. In 1961, the percentage of Catholics was 18 per cent; today they accounted for only 16 per cent. And these percentages it should be added, are based on the Church's own grossly exaggerated figures.

Atheism, the General said, should be fought on a modern scientific basis! A world-wide plan of action, sufficiently supple to be adapted to particular circumstances, should be drawn up and presented to the Supreme Pontiff. Then, said Father Arrupe, "animated and united by a spirit of absolute obedience to the Pope, and with charity, let us all, without exception, go to work in an organised fashion".

With charity, mind you! With equal charity we take up the challenge. Not all Humanists, Father Arrupe, are foolish enough to place faith in dialogue. There can be no reconciliation between Rome and reason.

SECULARISM AND GLAMOUR

(Concluded from page 323)

saloon to the gaol. She despises nothing, or so it seems, and she can make something good even out of what is second-rate. Of course she could not make truth out of falsehood or honesty out of hypocrisy, and the fact that there is one Miss Dietrich to create the "magic" is no reason for allowing the second-rate to come into existence and survive unchallenged; but she did remind me, at any rate, that although a beautiful binding won't improve a bad book, if the contents of the book are good it is a pity to let it be thought drab or even unimportant from the binding.

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Notices for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.
London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: Marble Arch, Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.
Tower Hill. Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.
Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.
Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.
North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.
Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Edinburgh Humanist Group (Central Library), Thursday, October 14th, 7.30 p.m.: G. HOLT, "Some Aspects of the Peace Pledge Union".
Edinburgh Secular Society (Central Halls, 25 Bath Street), Sunday, October 10th, 2.45 p.m.: Public Meeting, Speaker: WILLIAM CRONAN (Edinburgh).
Edinburgh Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, October 10th, 6.30 p.m.: D. NANDY, "Racial Equality".
Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, October 10th, 7.30 p.m.: G. N. DEV, "The Kashmir Conflict".
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, October 10th, 11 a.m.: Professor HYMAN LEVY, "I Discover America".
Tuesday, October 12th, 7.30 p.m.: Mrs. N. GURNEY-TAYLOR, "The Work of Citizens Advice Bureaux".

Notes and News

THE text of the revised *Schema* 13, on "The Church and the Modern World" has not been made public, but George Armstrong reported from Rome on September 22nd, that the general comments in the Ecumenical Council chamber indicate widespread dissatisfaction among the bishops" *the Guardian*, 23/9/65). Those who last year thought the *schema* unsuitable for discussion seem to have disappeared, said Mr. Armstrong, "but its once enthusiastic supporters now appear to feel that it will never be perfect cause of the material it covers". Cardinal Siri of Genoa and others objected that it was "humanistic and naturalistic rather than based on deep faith", but Cardinal Döpfner of Munich warned against over-optimism. The resolutions offered could, he said, "easily prove to be a genuine let-down for the world at large".

★

ARCHBISHOP Amici of Modena, in the Italian Communists' stronghold in the Emilia province, asked for more direct answers from the Church. "Our aim in approaching these problems should be to give straightforward answers based on the Gospel", he said. "An example is the problem of

birth control which should be answered and not dragged out any longer". The birth control *schema* annoyed the conservative Cardinal Ruffini of Palermo. It presented the Church in a bad light, "as though we were almost getting down on our knees in shame to beg pardon for past opposition to science". The Brazilian Archbishop Sigaud wanted the text changed to state that "since the end of the Middle Ages the progress of science has been remarkable in Christian nations". Provided, Mr. Armstrong added, that those nations "have had some Protestant rulers and a good sprinkling of Jews". And provided—we might add—that the scientists were prepared to defy both Catholic and Protestant opposition.

★

SOME months ago Rouen's co-adjutor, Archbishop André Paillet forecast a schism in the French Church before the end of the year if the Vatican Council approved the *schema* on religious liberty. French *intégristes* (conservatives), *Time* reported (11/6/65), deeply fear an "accommodation" with Communism: liberal Catholics by contrast are convinced that the Church must be "on the march"; they are eager to revive the worker-priests (condemned by Pius XII) and to "carry on a dialogue" with Marxists. The tension between the two groups has led to a number of demonstrations and a "noisy public war of words". In Paris last December, Dominican Yves Congar, one of France's leading theologians, "was hounded at a lecture by young *intégristes* yelling 'Go to Moscow, Marxist priest!'" And in some parts of France, the conservatives objected so strongly to the introduction of the vernacular in the mass, that they responded in Latin when the priest addressed the congregation in French. Disturbed by the publicity given to his speech, Archbishop Paillet later said that by "schism" he meant a spirit of disobedience towards the Council's decrees, rather than a formal split. But he would not have spoken out, *Time* suggested, without the advice and consent of other bishops. And it concluded, the bishops "face a touchy task of reconciliation in a land where those people who are serious about their faith are very serious indeed".

★

New Statesman editor Paul Johnson was in trouble with some readers over his criticism of Pope Paul. "How insensitive and bigoted can journalists get?" asked Bernard Gay, who was not a Catholic or even a Christian, but took particular exception to Mr. Johnson's comment that "the hand [of the Pope] hesitates to reach for the hot line to the Holy Ghost". A. S. B. Glover, who is a Catholic, regretted the lack of "ordinary courtesies of reference" in the designation of the present Roman pontiff as Pope Paul Montini. "Is it some kind of esoteric sneer . . . Or does the editor fear some confusion between the two Paul's?" Mr. Glover asked. What never occurred to him was that Mr. Johnson might be reminding us of the former Monsignor Montini, Pro-secretary of State to the late Pius XII.

★

A WELCOME letter from John Shephard informs us that his son David has made remarkable progress following a delicate brain operation. "Although much remains to be done before recovery is complete", Mr. Shephard writes, "we do feel that the darkest clouds have receded"; and he now intends to re-open his campaign against the Lord's Day Observance Society. He also thanks all those who wrote to him following the notice of his son's illness. And the ordeal has deepened Mr. Shephard's conviction that "it is in good, solid, sound people, who are ever-present in time of trouble, that one must pin one's faith".

The Leopard in a New Suit

(Concluded from page 322)

of the Holy See, and a storm of condemnation broke over Christendom. Apparently the peril of atomic war is preferable to association with the infidel.

This good Pope John, two months after his coronation, announced in his "Letter to the Bishops of Germany": "So far as We are concerned, We are not departing from the example set us by Our Predecessor with regard to the highly estimable German nation." On July 24th, 1959, he nominated as his Privy Chamberlain the notorious Franz von Papen, condemned to eight years' hard labour for his collaboration with Nazism. On December 14th of the same year he gave the red hat to the Jesuit Father Bea, German confessor to Pius XII — a signal favour, since the happy recipient jumped straight from the ranks without having to scale the intermediate grades of the canonry and episcopate.

So this stout peasant pope, who frisked his merry way through a term of office that startled the world with its daring innovations, raising wild hopes in all sorts of breasts and seeming to promise a new golden age, appears, on closer inspection, and beyond the dusty levelling of death, to have been after all fair-and-squarely planted on the same old track.

And why not? The bloc of Germanic peoples, bequeathed by Charlemagne to the Papacy as the bulwark of its power, the "secular arm" to enforce its authority, has remained ever since its chief support in Europe and its springboard to world-wide activity and conquest. The split at the Reformation, and lesser vicissitudes, have made no essential difference. Hence the oft-recurring dream of a restored Holy Roman Empire, a bee that for ever buzzes dangerously in the white skull-cap, provoking the sort of papal brain-fever which culminates in bouts of delirium wreaking world-havoc. Hence the curiously persistent Germanophilia of each succeeding pontiff, the unswerving continuity of frankly pro-German policy. To this also — we may hazard a shrewd guess — can be attributed the miraculous resurrection of West Germany from the total ruin of the Second World War, a miracle which, only twenty years after, gains her the distinction — as we are continually being assured by press and radio — of being the strongest power in Europe. It is a fine thing indeed — leaving aside the nobler part of man — to possess the sworn friendship of the Vicar of Christ, together with a pass-book to the inexhaustible Bank of the Holy Spirit.

It is Germany's misfortune, not her fault, that the Germanic character should have been moulded, by a freak of nature, in the pattern which *par excellence* accords with the implacable scheme of papal ambitions. We cannot blame her for having been evolved to fit like a flexible iron hand in the velvet glove of the Papacy. And she at least has shown stirrings of conscience, expressed some remorse, attempted reparation for her share in the partnership.

The other partner has never yet been known to beat her breast, except liturgically. Everything she does is for the Glory of God, so even the darkest deeds can be justified. Since ignorant men cannot always grasp this, it is often expedient to hoodwink them into thinking these things never happened, or that somebody else was responsible. Any stooge will do, and having neither heart nor conscience she is happy to let her partner bear the full opprobrium while she gets on with the vital job of whitewashing the Barque of Peter. The faithful are thus induced to believe that Hitler and his gangs were violent persecutors

of the Catholic Church — and not only the faithful by any means. The strange illogicality of the wholesale salvation of Nazi criminals by papal agency is presumably attributed to an excess of Christian forgiveness and heavenly charity.

But such is the power of world-hallucination wielded by this Witch of Endor, so intricate the twists and turns of policy in her endless manipulations of human pawns, that most bewildered minds have no chance of getting at the truth, and many prefer not to do so. Like so much else in this unthinking age of face-values and mass-persuasion, our present Envoy of Peace will be accepted as precisely what he proclaims himself to be. And since the term "dramatic" has already been used (on radio at least) to describe beforehand his appearance at the peace conference, we may be sure that the guileless public will be totally absorbed by the "drama" and as totally unaware of the genuine Grand Guignol behind it. Fascinated by this new facet of one who has a face for every situation, every environment, the spectators will have no idea (they never have) of what operates behind the masquerade: a single Will, ruthless and implacable.

No, I do not believe the leopard is changed under his new-peace suit. His spots are still there, very much there, nasty, grim and bloody. And — never let us forget it — the leopard is the sworn, eternal enemy of primates.

So — Pope Paul — rise up from your ecumenical council, board your 'plane to New York and take your place among men on the platform of peace. A good moment, well-chosen, while the ears of the world are strained to catch your momentous decrees. This sublime act of yours will forestall, by the grace of God, any danger of their being distracted by explosions from Heathendom. How shocking it would be if the voice of the assembled Fathers were to be drowned in gunfire, if the world's attention were diverted from Yourself as Director of Human Destinies, to the plight of a handful of wretched human combatants in need of direction!

As a man, your intention *may* be pure. As Head of the Church of Rome, "the last autocrat of civilisation", we cannot accept your integrity. Does your Church really want peace? She believes that Christ will be with her "all days, even to the consummation of the world". Would not her supreme audacity, supported by this conviction, sooner see man bring about this "consummation" by his own folly, than suffer any lessening of her power in a peaceful world?

History and personal experience have taught us the insufferable truth. We know too well that your Church "rapacious, warlike, stirring up conflicts, turning to her own benefit — with unfailing perfidy — the interests and passions of the world, far from fulfilling her mission of guardianship, has always been the worst sower of discord among the nations she claims to pacify and unite."¹⁰

1. Lord Russell of Liverpool, Legal Adviser in cases of war criminals, in "Sous le signe de la croix gammée" (*L'Ami du Livre*, Geneva, 1955, p. 217).
2. Henriette Feuillet: *France Nouvelle*, June 25th, 1949.
3. *ibid.*
4. Hervé Laurière, *Assassins au nom de Dieu* (Editions Dufour, 18 rue Dauphine, Paris) pp. 120 et seq.
5. *ibid.*
6. *Op cit.* pp. 113 et seq.
7. *Op cit.* pp. 87-90.
8. Edmond Paris, *The Vatican Against Europe*. Tr. A. Robson. (P. R. Macmillan Ltd., London) p.18.
9. Hervé Laurière, *op cit.* pp. 136, 137.
10. Edmond Paris, *op cit.* p. 22.

Friday the Thirteenth

By T. HILL

WHENEVER WE entered our classroom, someone stood at the door and counted. After twelve, there was a blockage. Nobody wanted to be the "unlucky" thirteenth. And even today it is still considered peculiarly unlucky to be the thirteenth guest at table and many hotels number the room between 12 and 14 as "12A".

We have started exploring interstellar space, yet primitive superstitions die hard. In dreams and gambling, numbers are still considered charged with mystical potentialities; folklore and astrology tell you of lucky and unlucky days, whilst in particular the numbers 3, 7 and 12 have assumed a kind of sanctity. That of the three may have derived from the family of father-mother-child, and in all religions there is a reigning *trimurti* or trinity; a similarly simple explanation may be given for 5, 10 and its multiples, since counting must have started by means of the fingers and, in addition, the toes.

However, mensuration and arithmetic started not only by counting but also by observation of the stars and in particular the moon which, by its regular changes (phases) every 7 days made it possible to measure time; the moon-god, therefore, was considered the teacher of mankind. By combining the mass of stars into imaginative figures, and in particular selecting the zodiacal belt of 12 figurations and observing the seasonal passage of sun and planets through it, planned husbandry (i.e. timing of planting and reaping of crops) became possible. In order to memorise the zodiacal sequence, simple stories were invented and later collected as "Holy Scripture" (all religious stories from the Mahābhārata to the Bible show the same utilitarian trend). It is easy to show that arising from the 12 signs of the ecliptic the number 12 has become sanctified, as being represented in the 12 tribes of the Old Testament and the 12 disciples in the New. But why 12 was chosen in the first place and not, say, 10 is still a moot point.

We know that the Babylonians divided the day into 12 *kapsu* = double hours, but what does it prove? They wrote their numbers on a combined scale of 10 and 60 (in Mesopotamia the decimal and sexagesimal systems existed side by side) and we still make 60 seconds = 1 minute and 60 minutes (12×5) one hour. Was the 12 arrived at through the division of 60 by the number of fingers, or perhaps by multiplying the 4 phases of the moon with the most popular of mystic numbers, the 3?

During geocentric times, it was believed that there were 7 planets; according to the observable speed of their orbital motion they were allotted a day each to "govern"; starting with sun and moon, thus Satur-day fell under the sway of Saturn, the most sluggish planet whose gloomy aspect aroused awe in the primitive mind. Saturn became the visible representative of death and the day of saturnial influence — Saturday — a day of ill luck (Babylonian *ibbu* = day of wrath). During their Babylonian captivity, the Hebrew tribes became acquainted with astronomy and its outcrop, astrology, and they adopted the Babylonian custom of complete Sabbath rest, since all activity on this ill-starred day must end in catastrophe. When, back in Palestine, they enthroned Saturn, the irate and unpredictable "Baal-Seven", as their supreme god Jahve, the importance of the Saturn-day was still enhanced.

Generally in our temperate zones people forget that the sun is an inimical force in the tropical countries. In antiquity both sun and moon were simultaneously invested with opposing aspects, as benefactors and enemies: as

light-bringer and life-giver the sun (particularly in its spring aspect) is venerated, but as destroyer it attains Mars' qualities. The pale new moon is representative of death before resurrection, but in general the moon-god is the particular friend and teacher of mankind. The beneficial and malignant qualities of the "Heavenly twins" (e.g. Simon-Peter and Saul-Paul) were fused. With the spring equinox in the constellation of Taurus (the bull), they were believed to start from two neighbouring star groups: the moon from the Hyades or "rainy sisters" (from Greek *hyein* = to rain; they were the wet-nurses of Dionysus) — a group of five stars in the head of Taurus. The helical rising of this cluster coincided with the beginning of the rainy season. Accordingly Michelangelo's Moses bears the crescent in its symbolical form of bull horns, and during the — legendary — 40 years in the desert he strikes water out of a rock. It also explains why there have to be five books of Moses, the Pentateuch.

The sun, on the other hand, "dwells" in the Pleiades, which form the shoulder of Taurus. Of this group 7 stars were visible to the eye; accordingly the Indian sun-god has the epithet *Sapāsapti* = Lord Seven, driving a chariot with 7 horses. The mystical 12 may just be the sum of the Heavenly twins, viz. $5 + 7$.

We have 12 months of unequal length; the Jews have lunar months and, in order to keep up with the solar year, they have to duplicate one month periodically. The Greeks and Romans, too, had to annex additional days (*epagomenai*), and the uncertain nature of these additions may have given a sinister flavour to the 13. In Mexico, and according to Nordic belief, these were the days when the forces of the underworld (death and hell) were let loose (Woden's chase). These days belonged neither to the old nor the new year.

Friday, the day of Frejja (Venus), was dedicated to love and marriage, but as in Christian mythology the sunhero Jesus is resurrected on Easter Sunday — after three days — he must have died on a Friday, and this day therefore has been observed as a day of half-fasts. You eat fish because the fish was holy to Venus.

Our calendar is a purely conventional (and not too practical) way of measuring time. However, every New Year's Eve people behave as if virtually something would change. When we write Friday the 13th, people with a different calendar have a different day and do not even dream it may bring ill luck. However, it is high time to dispense with all these ludicrous superstitions altogether, and once the one connected with 13 is overcome we may be able to revert to a calendar with 13 months of 28 days each and have a stable calendar with every date falling on the same fixed day.

NO US ENVOY TO VATICAN

IN May of this year, Dr. Louis D. Newton, national president of POAU (Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State) addressed a letter to President Lyndon Johnson protesting against the rumoured appointment of a United States envoy to the Vatican. A letter dated July 9th, signed by James L. Greenfield, informed Dr. Newton that: "Although there has been recent press speculation on the question of United States-Vatican relations, I assure you that the Department of State has no present plans to alter the existing situation".

NEW MARRIAGE ROOM AT RICHMOND

THREE years ago it was brought to my notice that facilities for civil marriage in Richmond were very inadequate, couples wishing for this having to go to the Kingston register office. I therefore wrote to the Town Clerk suggesting that when the new Borough of Richmond-on-Thames came into being, which would necessitate certain reconstructions, a suitable and dignified Marriage Hall or room should be provided. It was hardly fair that those members of the public who had no religious allegiance, or who did not wish to incur the expense of a journey to Kingston, should be driven to make a convenience of the churches; neither was it fair to the latter. The Town Clerk replied that the matter would be borne in mind.

Later on when the new Borough was about to take office the local Humanist Group, through its Secretary, Nigel Sinnott, sent a letter in much the same terms, but mentioning the very interesting broadcast in the BBC Home service by a registrar (anonymous) on the tremendous response his own borough had enjoyed after setting up a handsomely equipped Marriage Room in their Council offices.

Six months ago Richmond did itself provide such a Marriage Room in Sheen Lane, serving the whole Borough; and we now learn that the response has been equally phenomenal—600 weddings in the six months the room has been in use. I had the privilege last week of attending one of these marriages and was most impressed with what I saw; with the tastefully furnished modern room, beautifully carpeted and curtained, and the attractive flower arrangements. The short legal ceremony was performed by the Superintendent Registrar in a dignified yet friendly way, in the warm atmosphere of a family gathering. We felt that we were witnessing the sealing of a contract between two people in a civilised manner. There is a charming small entrance vestibule with flowers, comfortable cloakroom facilities, and an excellent car park. Those who planned and carried out this very necessary amenity in Richmond deserve sincere congratulations.

An immediate practical objective of Freethought and Humanist branches and groups throughout the country might well be to press for the establishment of attractive secular marriage facilities where these do not already exist.

ELIZABETH COLLINS

CORRESPONDENCE

THE PRESS COUNCIL

Earlier this year a column in the *South London Press* criticised the Southwark Diocesan Catholic Parents' and Electors' Association for seeking 100 per cent state support of church schools. Invited by the editor to reply, the association submitted a 430-word letter with a proviso that it be published in full or not at all. As the *South London Press* is a commercial publication and not a haven for prolixity like a parish magazine, not surprisingly the answer to this ultimatum was "not at all". The association complained to the Press Council on the grounds that it was not invited to submit a shorter version and that the paper commented on without publishing the letter. The editor denied both charges.

The Press Council has just issued its adjudication. It states, *inter alia*, that "the way in which the Editor handled this incident is not calculated to improve relations between Press and public. The complaint is upheld".

This decision would not have occasioned comment if it were part of a consistent policy of defending public sensibilities. It is, however, in striking contrast with other judgments.

The most notorious of these involved the *Daily Express*. On March 2nd, 1964 an editorial attributed manslaughter and hooliganism at Cambridge and overall "Lost Standards" to "a stream of propaganda from so-called free thinkers". Letters of protest were at once sent to the editor from the organised Freethought movement of the country. Not only were these letters not pub-

lished but a further editorial on March 6th attributed teenage indecency to the same "noisy band of propagandists". Official complaints were made to the Press Council by the Freethought-Humanist movement. They were dismissed.

It will be seen how impartial is this anomalous pseudo-independent body, putting itself forward as defender of the public interest, what are the interests it really defends, and how much attention need be paid to its findings.

DAVID TRIBE

(President, National Secular Society)

THE MAN JESUS

Mr. H. Cutner is so naive that he really believes that because Sir James Frazer did not mention anything about the non-historicity of Jesus in his own abridged one volume of *The Golden Bough* he therefore must have changed his mind regarding his belief of Jesus as a true historical figure. What kind of logical thinking is this for a man who prides himself on being a rationalist, atheist and freethinker?

Surely he must think that the readers of THE FREETHINKER are quite easily gulled. Sir James Frazer never detracted what he said about Jesus in the unabridged volumes of *The Golden Bough*, and therefore what Mr. Cutner says to the contrary is meaningless. Sir James Frazer knew all about the hypothesis of a mythical Christ, but he did not accept it; in fact, he advocated the very opposite.

If Mr. Cutner can produce any substantial evidence that Frazer changed his mind regarding the historicity of Jesus, I would like to hear it, and if he can't I advise him to stop making rash statements about Frazer's change of view towards Jesus as an historical figure. Is Mr. Cutner a mind-reader or what? I am not interested in what Mr. Cutner thinks but whether he can produce real evidence to substantiate his thought.

None of the greatest thinkers deny the existence of Jesus, and even H. G. Wells in his book *The Outline of History*, said this about Jesus: "In spite of miraculous and incredible additions, one is obliged to say, 'Here was a man. This part of the tale could not have been invented'". Wells was, of course, anti-Christian, but was not silly enough to deny the historical existence of Jesus.

R. SMITH

ABORTION LAW REFORM ASSOCIATION

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The Freethinker

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Price Sixpence

APPARENTLY one the stormiest debates in the long-drawn-out Vatican Council, arose over the question of religious toleration. For while the still apparently (more or less) liberal majority of the prelates at the Council voted in favour of the unqualified right of the individual to choose his own religious persuasion, the diehard traditionalist cardinals (mostly, as one would expect, Italian or Spanish) opposed this crucial resolution strongly in a last ditch stand. The stand was only to be expected since, not only would the frank recognition of (shall we say?) the right of self-determination in religion *ipso facto* condemn much in the actual past practice of the Roman Catholic Church, but (as I shall presently argue) the admission of religious self-determination strikes at the very roots of the entire doctrinal system of the one true Church. Consequently, when a Spanish cardinal publicly stated that the Church of Rome alone had the right to preach the Gospel, and Cardinal Ruffini of Palermo reasserted the medieval doctrine that the Catholic Church had the right to suppress heresy by force and to prevent Protestant missionaries in Catholic lands, they were only repeating what St. Thomas Aquinas would have regarded as elementary and self-evident facts.

In support of the novel thesis of religious toleration, such American Cardinals as Cushing of Boston, and Spellman of New York, evidently took their inspiration from the American Constitution, the very first amendment of which asserts the complete independence of church and state along with its necessary corollary that the secular power cannot and must not intervene in religious questions. To be sure, American Catholics have accepted this view since 1824, when Bishop John England first made the historic declaration later popularised by the Irish Catholic Daniel O'Connell, that he "took his religion from Rome, but his politics from his country". Without venturing to anticipate the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who infallibly guides the Council, we think it is probable that this latter American view will finally prevail at Rome and that the days of the Inquisition are past, if only for the mundane reason that whilst the Vatican holds the Keys of Heaven, American Catholicism holds the Vatican's purse strings by contributing some 80 per cent of its total funds. And if money speaks all languages, Latin (and Italian) must surely be included amongst them. Today, the Almighty Dollar can extinguish even the *auto da fé*.

Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus Datur

The above sentence, "outside the Church there is no salvation", represents the key text in the evolution of religious persecution. Critics of Rome are far too inclined to treat the whole question of religious persecution empirically and not (as they should) doctrinally. For, however sadistic in practice, the monstrous millennial reign of terror which Rome unleashed against the supreme crime of heresy throughout the ages of faith, and which reached its height during the Counter-Reformation, it was not primarily due to sadism. Contrarily, its origin lay in the perversion of

the human intellect and of human logic by Catholic theology, then supposedly "the queen of the sciences". The then unchallenged masters of this regal science such as St. Augustine of Hippo (4th century), St. Thomas Aquinas (13th century), and their successors and imitators, argued the whole case for the judicial murder of heretics with impeccable logic in cold blood and in cold print; and their inevitable point of departure was precisely that of the cardinal quoted above: "Outside the Church, there is no salvation".

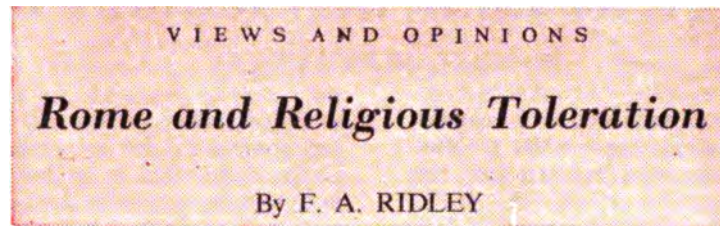
Once the truth implicit in this ecclesiastical aphorism was granted—and in the Middle Ages it was virtually an article of faith, to deny which was in itself heresy—the whole practice

and theory of religious persecution followed easily and indeed inevitably. Once conceded that the eternal salvation of each and every person depends ultimately and exclusively upon his (or her) doctrinal belief, then any and every means are surely legitimate to keep the individual on the straight and narrow path of salvation or to constrain the living soul who had slipped off it into the mortal guilt of heresy, the supreme crime of the ages of faith. Nor, if it were necessary to employ them, were torture and death, the rack and the stake to be excluded from such redemptory agencies. Particularly since the worst agonies that the Inquisition could inflict, were merely temporary and ephemeral compared with the infernal torments and eternal agonies prepared by the devil and his angels for the infidel heretical souls who were *extra ecclesiam*, and for whom accordingly, "no salvation is given".

The Church in the ages of faith persecuted for many and various reasons: religious, political, even economic; but the mental, logical basis for all this gigantic pyramid of atrocities; for the unspeakable cruelties of the Inquisition and for the appalling miseries that it inflicted, lay in the single theological dogma of exclusive salvation. It was not until Luther first effectively challenged this dogma in his epoch-making Wittenberg thesis: "The Holy Spirit does not desire the death of heretics" (Cf. Isaac Taylor and *The Rudiments of Jesuitism*, 1848) that the idea of toleration made its appearance in Christianity, and to be sure it took even the Protestant Reformers themselves quite a while to learn to practise its implications.

Exit the Inquisition

If we are to judge from the recent proceedings of the Second Vatican Council, "the one true Church" in 1965 has now caught up with the arch-heretic Martin Luther in 1517! For the Holy Spirit in Rome also, no longer "desires the death of heretics". Apparently the dogma of exclusive salvation also goes with it, that terrible dogma which, as the Protestant historian Lecky tersely phrased it, has caused the Church of Rome to shed more innocent blood than any other recorded institution. But the possible inferences from such a revolutionary change are incalculable, so much so in fact that Rome's most audacious critics have hardly even begun seriously to consider their ultimate possibilities. What is Roman Catholicism



going to look like in a few centuries time?

A Protestant Prophet

In 1848 a perceptive Protestant critic, Isaac Taylor, soon after the publication of Newman's *Development of Christian Doctrine*, predicted that Newman's then novel and audacious theory would eventually be adopted by the Church of Rome and that once adopted, it could and would be used by the Vatican impartially either to pile on fresh superstitions in an age of superstition or to abolish superstition in an age of science. Today, more than a century later, the first of these predictions is already fulfilled: for Rome, hostile in 1848, has nowadays swallowed Newman's "development" theory, hook, line and sinker. Rome is, in fact, at present developing so fast as to make

the great Cardinal turn over uneasily in his Birmingham tomb! Is the second part of this far-sighted prediction also destined for eventual fulfilment and if so, how? In this connection, we note with much interest (as Isaac Taylor would surely have done) the recent dialogue between representatives of Rome and of the International Humanist and Ethical Union. Has the Vatican, with that serpentine wisdom with which it is so often credited, decided that in this secular age, Humanism is ultimately inevitable and invincible; and that accordingly it proposes to adopt and to make its own the apt maxim: if you can't beat them, join them? Rationalists often tend to forget that Rome has always claimed to be the *only* completely rationalist organisation in existence!

Religious Issue in Vietnam War

By C. STANLEY LOWELL

AMERICANS ARE generally aware that there is a religious factor involved in the rapidly escalating conflict in Vietnam. How has a religious issue been injected into this already complex situation?

It begins with the French colonialists who brought their Catholic religion with them when they settled in what was then called Indochina. The French were not avid Catholics at home but took it more seriously on the foreign field. The reason: they recognised that religion could be a useful influence in pacifying and administering the area. Roman Catholicism became a recognised force in the educational and cultural life of the country.

The Vietnamese war for independence from France was finally successful in 1954 with the victory of Dien Bien Phu. (The French had been 80 per cent financed by the United States.) What happened then is described in a careful article by Robert Scheer in the January-February 1965 issue of *Ramparts*.

There was a general exodus of Vietnamese Catholics from north to south. This was described by Dr. Tom Dooley as a flight from Communist atrocities. He issued his call for a crusade against the godless Communists.

About this time Francis Cardinal Spellman of New York injected himself into the situation. His house guest for some years, a man sitting out the war against the French, was Ngo-Dinh-Diem. Cardinal Spellman persuaded President Eisenhower that Diem was just the man to lead an anti-Communist régime in South Vietnam. It was US support that subsequently kept President Diem in power. US aid administered by Catholic Relief Services actually kept these mostly Catholic émigrés for three years. Local priests served as agents. Per capita outlay was \$89 per person compared with the country's annual per capita income of \$85.

Diem was a brother of the Catholic Archbishop Ngo-Dinh-Thuc of Hué in Vietnam and a devout Catholic himself. In erecting his administrative apparatus, he relied primarily on Catholics. The complaint I encountered again and again in Vietnam was that if one wanted to get anywhere in the military or in the civil administration he had to join the Catholic Church.

Added to this was the patronage lavished on the Church by the Diem régime. It is true that there was a long tradition of religious and political integration in Vietnam. Both Buddhism and Roman Catholicism were financially aided by the government. There can be no doubt that Roman Catholicism reaped the lion's share of these emoluments. Already the leaders in education as a

result of French policy, that Church received considerable government aid for its work in this field. The handsome Catholic churches in Saigon attest the hierarchy's success in tapping government funds. Buddhists, though far more numerous, were poorly organised and generally less knowledgeable in such matters.

When I discussed the situation with Archbishop Thuc he explained that the bad feeling between the two groups was inspired by Buddhist envy. "They are jealous of what we have," he said. He explained that this was French policy and his brother had merely continued it.

President Diem was anti-Communist to be sure, but he was other things as well. When Irish Catholics parade in New York City Protestant politicians are out there leading the way. But when Buddhists paraded in Vietnam Diem had his troops fire on them, break up the procession, and throw the leaders into jail. Of course this could not continue. The United States had to withdraw its support from Diem and he fell. (He never had popular support at any time.)

The unfortunate antipathy between Buddhists and Catholics has continued and even become worse. None of the succeeding governments has been able to discover a formula of reconciliation. The animosity has deepened and hardened to the point where the two groups are more hostile to each other than to the Viet Cong.

Dispatches from Saigon indicate steady deterioration of the religious situation. If a government satisfies the Catholics the Buddhists are resentful, and they arrange protest demonstrations. If the Buddhists are pleased the Catholics are unhappy, and they march in anger. Those who know Vietnam well insist that unless the two groups can find some basis for a working agreement the anti-Communist cause in South Vietnam is worse than hopeless.

When I was in Vietnam I made bold in several conversations to suggest separation of church and state. They looked at me as though I were out of my mind. Experts see everything but the obvious.

[Reprinted from *Church and State*, September 1965]

PAGAN HALOES

A TECHNICAL booklet (published by CIBA Ltd., Duxford, Cambridge) on the restoration of a large Roman mosaic discovered at Brantingham, a few miles west of Hull, contains some excellent illustrations of goddesses. "The haloes usually associated with Christian saints", the booklet explains, "appear at this period also in pagan art".

Agnosticism

By CHAPMAN COHEN

AS THE AGNOSTIC when he says "I neither affirm nor deny the existence of God," anything in mind? Is his declaration of agnosticism intelligible to himself? Does it really contain anything more than a desire to guard against being identified with that terrible thing atheism?andidly I can find nothing more than this. Even if we use the very ambiguous word "spirit", the Agnostic cannot mean that he is in doubt as to whether there is a number of spirits controlling nature and human activities. That would bring him straight back to fetishism.

By some, agnosticism is described as a case of suspended judgment. Suspended judgment on what? Does the Agnostic suspend judgment as to whether God has ever meant anything other than a magnified man? Many modern religionists deny God the possession of a physically animal structure. He has not the shape of man. He has neither arms nor legs, he has neither a physical head nor a physical structure such as a man has. But he is still capable of love, anger, wisdom, etc. Yet these are as such animal and human characteristics as arms and legs. Intelligence, love, desire, are as human as red hair and de-whiskers. What is it about which judgment is suspended? It is no use to keep up a steady chatter, "we do not say that God is or God is not", if one has not the faint notion of what God is, and would not know him if he were found. Looking for a black cat in a black passage on a black night is a very stiff proposition, but at least we do know what "cat" and "black" and "passage" are for. The Agnostic is looking for a "what-you-may-call-it" in a "thingumajig" and a "whatsisname". If he ever found it he would never recognise his discovery.

The Agnostic warmly declares that he knows nothing about God. That is the foundation of his creed. But if that was all he implied, the statement would hardly be worth making. He obviously means more than this. What he says is, "I know nothing about God." What he implies is the justification of his own credo is "Neither does anyone else." And, as we shall see, when he justifies this, he is justifying precisely the position taken up by the avowed atheist.

Perhaps the most curious attempt to make the agnostic position intelligible was essayed by the late Sir Leslie Stephen. In his *Agnostic's Apology*, he solemnly informs us that "The Agnostic is one who asserts — what no one denies — that there are limits to human understanding." Of all the apologies that have been put forward this is surely the poorest and the weakest. Where is the necessity to coin a new word to affirm what nobody has ever denied? One might as reasonably establish a society of "nose-ites" and limit the human membership to those who have nasal organs. There might be a certain convenience in adopting a formula that puts one in agreement with everybody, but it is hardly worth while. After all, a definition must define — that is, it must exclude as well as include. And if the meaning of agnosticism is as given by Sir Leslie Stephen, in what way does it differentiate the agnostic from the Atheist, or from anyone else? The agnostic apparently believes nothing that others do not believe, and says nothing that all others do not say.

Let us, as the professional evangelist would say, get back to God. And I begin with something that everyone actually does believe. The world as we know it (which is the only world we can deal with) is made up of *things*, or as some would prefer to put it, of events. But all

events, whatever they are like, or wherever they occur, are single in their existence. We have collective terms such as "tree", "man", "bird", and so forth, but there is not a tree separate from particular trees, or "man" distinct from particular men.

I stress this consideration because a great deal of the confusion connected with "God" is due to its neglect. There are a multitude of gods in the world, as there are a multitude of trees, and in the earlier stages of civilisation gods are contemptibly common. Many of them have passed away, and many new ones have been created; but there is no such conceivable thing as a "God" that is distinct from particular gods. The gods can be collected, tabulated, and their common characteristics noted, just as one can collect different men, brown, red, yellow, white, tabulate them and indicate what features they have.

Abstract words are very often useful instruments of thought. Without them human thought could not get very far. But when we mistake abstractions for concrete existences, confusion is certain to follow.

Now the gods of the world are as well known and as well understood as the trees of the world. And if we were to take all the gods that have ever existed, and add to them the gods that do exist, the Agnostic would not hesitate to dismiss them one after the other as mere figments of the imagination. In the end he would become a deicide on the most elaborate and comprehensive scale. More than that, in terms of his agnosticism, he would deny the existence of any other god that any people could ever conceive or worship. The gods of existing savages, the gods of the Mohammedan, the Jew, the Christian, would all go. But if all gods, past and present, *and* future, are rejected as having no better existence than the ghost that haunts the old baronial castle, what has he in mind when he says that he does not deny the existence of God. He is denying the existence of any conceivable god, and an inconceivable proposition is just nonsense.

Or if, as is said, the Agnostic suspends judgment as to whether God exists or not, what God is it he has in mind? As I have written elsewhere, if I say that I don't believe in the existence of the only kind of bird, fish, or tree that is known to me, that I believe they are all creatures of the imagination, but add that I will not say that there does not exist anywhere a fish that has not the structure of a fish and does not live in the water, or that I think there may be in existence a bird that is quite unlike a bird in both structure and habits, or that there may exist somewhere a tree without roots, trunk or branches, etc., I shall quite properly be told that if I run across these things they are certainly not fish, bird, or tree. Can anyone think of a thing existing which is quite unlike any other thing of the same name or nature? The man who is looking for a god or a bird that is entirely unlike the bird and the god he knows would not know them for either god or bird if he ran across either or both.

We have not yet reached the end of the confusion and self-contradictions of the Agnostic. The only helpful definition of God that we could find was that God began as one of a company of spirits who exercised control over some part of nature. I accept that definition, not because it suits my own position, but because my position has grown out of the anthropological account of the origin of gods. Every god the world has known began existence

(Concluded on page 335)

This Believing World

It would be fair, we suggest, to say that the four Reverend gentlemen who are also Professors and who gave us recently on BBC TV four lectures on the Gospels, might well have had the support of some Humanists, so little did they believe in what can be called old-fashioned Christianity. In the lectures we heard, we cannot remember one speaker who declared that Jesus Christ was the true and only Son of Almighty God, specially sent down from his abode in Heaven to save sinful man from the fire of Hell. In fact, we don't remember any one of them declaring that the miracles of Jesus actually happened.

★

INSTEAD one of them pointed out in the clearest possible way that the famous changing water into wine could not actually have happened, and was probably first written as a parable. On October 1st, they spent half an hour on TV answering viewers' questions, every one of which was in defence of the Christianity we all know. In every case the Professors explained that modern biblical scholarship could not accept the supernatural, and that nobody really knew what was meant by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, in dozens of cases. The Faith of our Fathers was the one thing none of the speakers believed in.

★

IT IS all very heartbreaking of course, but youngsters these days love "petting", and they indulge in it often among tombstones, much to the disgust of parishioners and the vicar in Holyhead, Anglesey (*The People*, 19/9/65). The youngsters, complains the vicar, Canon Davies, are "even found in the pews", and parents in the church "don't like their children to be around because of what is going on". And he pathetically adds that "the youngsters are let loose by their parents who I suppose are in pubs, or playing bingo". But after all, can we really blame the young people? Petting is far more exciting than listening to dreary sermons?

★

A PICTURE taken by an unknown photographer from an aeroplane over the Alps in 1958, which appeared then in the *People* is one which, we are told, "millions of people want to see again". And why? Well, in a "splash" of snow and earth in the centre, "they can see the face of Christ". We tried for half an hour to see his face, and completely failed, and so did every one else to whom we showed it. No doubt this is because we are confirmed sceptics—though turning the picture round, we got the representation of a dog. *The People* (19/9/65) calls it "a miracle in the snow". Alas, we do not believe in miracles, and so we have been unable to locate "our blessed Lord" in it.

★

So THE desecration of the Sabbath day is becoming more and more complete. Next summer, county cricket will be played on Sundays—enough to shock the Lord's Day Observance Society into paroxysms of anger! Either the Sabbath Day is a "holy" day in the eyes of God, or it is not. Is not Sunday God's own special day of rest for workers and idlers alike? Yet cricket correspondents seem delighted. "The better the day the better will be the deed", said one of them.

★

CARDINAL HEENAN, that determined opponent of artificial contraception, has been "pleading" with the Vatican Council "to hold up discussion on marriage" (*Daily Express*, 1/10/65). He wants the Pope to receive "guidance from scientists and theologians" particularly on the Pill. How different this is from the guidance which used to be

asked for! Then, it was praying to God Almighty, and getting the guidance direct from Jesus and Mary. Does the Cardinal really believe any guidance from scientists can possibly equal that from heaven through prayer?

Call for Integration in Scottish Schools

"How long are we going to allow our children to drink in bigotry along with their school milk?" asked Andrew Fergus in the Scottish *Sunday Mail* on September 26th. He asked it in a week in which Scotland had been shocked by the news that police had to be called in to stop "open warfare between primary pupils of Protestant and Catholic schools".

And he pointed out that, in all the enquiries and recriminations that followed the incident, one pertinent little question had never been properly answered: "Who gave these children the idea that they were so different in the first place?"

Who—he asked the Education Authorities—first foisted the Billy-or-a-Dan complex on the children when they were five years old? Who first taught them that Protestants and Catholics never played in the same playground? Who imposed an apartheid so complete that it was impossible they should ever become friends?

We hear plenty from the County Councillors about Comprehensive Schools, Mr. Fergus said; about how shocking it is to segregate our pupils according to their intelligence.

But they seemed to hide their sense of shock easily enough when it came to the even greater evil of separating the children according to their religious persuasions.

We are pitifully short of teachers, of schools, and of modern equipment, Mr. Fergus continued. And, the present system causes a wasteful duplication of all three.

Yet never in all these years had the Scottish Education Department pointed out that "there is not one valid reason why Protestants and Catholics should not share the same buildings—that classes can be split just as easily for religious instruction as they now are for woodwork and domestic science".

Most of all, though, Mr. Fergus addressed the Churches themselves. "For years they have been assuring us they are moving closer together. For years they have been exchanging pleasant visits. For years they have been holding fruitless discussions on dogma and dearly-held convictions. And in all that time, the one field in which they could have achieved almost total co-operation has been wilfully ignored—that is the real tragedy of last week's incident.

"Far too many people are only too ready to pay lip-service to some academic idea of integration—but completely unready to accept the one concrete fact about it that is certain: That any integration must begin with our children. That the only place to start is in our schools. And that the time to do it is not tomorrow, but right now. While the idea of Comprehensive education is still on everybody's lips! While the new school buildings are still on the drawing board! While the terrifying shouts of those bigoted 10-year-olds are still ringing in our ears!"

The response of the Rev. Canon Peter Morrison, Roman Catholic co-opted member of Glasgow Education Committee, was reported in the same issue of the *Sunday Mail*. Religion, he said, "is as much part of life as education is. You can't just have half-an-hour set aside here and there for religious teaching. It must flow through the entire system".

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Requests for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.
London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.
(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.
Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.
Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.
North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.
Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (New Victoria Hotel, Corporation Street), Sunday, October 17th, 6.45 p.m.: MARY HILL, "The Causes of War".
Bristol Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, October 17th, 6.30 p.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM, "Human Nature".
Manchester Branch NSS (Wheatshaf Hotel, High Street), Sunday, October 17th, 7.30 p.m.: A Meeting.
South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, W.C.1), Sunday, October 17th, 11 a.m.: H. L. BEALES, "Social Morality Today".
Tuesday, October 19th, 7.30 p.m.: FRANK THURGOOD, "The Need for an International Language".
Workers' Educational Association, Hampstead Branch, (Burgh House, New End Square, N.W.3), Sunday, October 17th, 2.30 p.m.: DAVID TRIBE, "God or Man?"

Notes and News

POPE PAUL VI's 14-hour visit to New York is now history and, we dare suggest, largely forgotten. Except, of course, by the 25,000 Catholic children assembled at Kennedy Airport by Cardinal Spellman, and by the Catholics who thronged St. Patrick's Cathedral and the Yankee Stadium, where the Pope celebrated mass. The speech to the United Nations was full of the expected platitudes about peace. We should seriously like to think that it has brought "peace on earth" a little nearer. But has it? Will President Johnson, who issued a joint peace appeal with Pope John, withdraw his troops from Vietnam? Will British troops quit Aden? Has the situation altered in Kashmir? It may be argued that the Pope has no influence in these matters. Fair enough. But he could order Roman Catholics of all countries to refuse to fight and to work genuinely for peace. Think of the effect in America alone.

★

THE New York authorities may remember the Pope's visit as "posing the biggest and costliest security problem" which the police department has ever had to face. It involved, according to Joyce Egginton of the *Observer* (10/10/65), "an extensive check on buildings, alleyways and

entrances along the 24-mile processional route . . . an investigation of the whereabouts and habits of known anti-Roman Catholic fanatics, and the stationing of police riflemen on rooftops". Within the city's 26,000-man police force all days off and holidays were cancelled to provide "the largest commitment of police in New York history for any single event". The cost in overtime alone was put at \$1 million.

★

"IT IS said", wrote Miss Egginton, "to be the Pope's idea that he should arrive here like an ordinary passenger on a regular Alitalia commercial flight". But who said such a silly thing? The *Observer's* rival paper, the *Sunday Times* exploded the ordinariness of the flight. The plane was in normal service, but part of its first class section had been turned into personal quarters for His Holiness. It was decorated in green velvet and had a crucifix and a bronze bas-relief of the Madonna of Loreto. There was also a bed on which the Pope could rest. Only one thing was ordinary: the fare. The Pope's first-class return ticket cost him \$890, as it would any ordinary person.

★

AS THE Archbishop of Canterbury was announcing the text of his sermon in the Church of Charles the Martyr at Falmouth on September 26th, an elderly man jumped up and shouted "Clean your church of false priests . . . stop the drift to Rome" (*Western Evening Herald*, 27/9/65). Church officials had some difficulty in reaching the interrupter, who had secured a seat in the centre of the main block of pews, but he was eventually "pulled out" and escorted from the church. Dr. Ramsey meanwhile stood "silent and impassive".

★

IN THE BBC Home Service broadcast by *The Critics* on September 12th, a member of the panel remarked that Professor Walter L. Arnstein's book *The Bradlaugh Case* didn't indicate what sort of man Charles Bradlaugh was. Eighty-four-year-old Mrs. B. Dorer of Hornchurch described him for *Radio Times* readers (30/9/65). "He was very tall and broad-shouldered", she wrote, "with a magnificent head and a fine countenance; and like most great men his manners were very gentle in ordinary life". Mrs. Dorer's father, Richard Green, who was subsequently Mayor of King's Lynn, and his brother Robert, had "adopted wholeheartedly the political outlook and atheistic views on religion of freethinkers like Bradlaugh" and "did not disdain being called 'atheists and infidels'". And, after the Second World War, when Mrs. Dorer became JP for the County of Norfolk, she affirmed instead of taking the oath.

★

Two 20-year-old labourers, Patrick Wilson and Cornelius Buckley, pleaded guilty at Balham to stealing lead worth £7 10s. from the unoccupied St. Giles's Vicarage, Camberwell, after being caught in the act. When arrested, Wilson told the police, "If I had known it was a vicarage I wouldn't have done it as I'm a strong Catholic". In court, he repeated: "We thought the building was a school. If we had known it was a vicarage we wouldn't have done it. I'm very sorry about it" (*South London Press*, 28/9/65). "I shouldn't worry too much", said the Clerk of the Court, "you are not being charged with sacrilege". Wilson was fined £25 and Buckley was remanded in custody for reports.

★

THIS week, in response to many requests, we reprint the late Chapman Cohen's views on "Agnosticism", taken from his pamphlet of that name.

Epicureanism . . . A Preparation for Christianity

By R. SMITH

IN THE nature of its spirit, and the procedure of many of its doctrines Epicureanism could very easily be looked upon as preparation for Christianity in the Greco-Roman world. For anyone who has taken careful study of the two creeds it becomes evident that they have much the same spiritual approach. Friedrich Nietzsche knew this only too well, as the teaching of Epicurus appeared to him to be a sort of pre-existing Christianity, because in his view both creeds were framed for the weak and timorous and debotched. For those who wished to escape from the hustle and bustle of life, and had no desire to take an active part in world affairs, Epicureanism was a haven of rest.

Like original Christianity it was a doctrine of renunciation, as it taught men to shirk living; it was a doctrine of escape, a running away from life. To a sympathetic scholar it seemed, "Like the twilight between the beliefs that were passing away and which rose after the time of Epicurus". Epicureanism, therefore, being the first missionary philosophy was quite a natural preparation for Christianity, one of the first missionary religions. Epicureanism had been detached from Greek politics and Christianity was to be detached from Jewish politics. Both doctrines were formed for men of peace who desired happiness and blessedness through renunciation.

The Christians, like the Epicureans, formed their ethics on love and friendliness, and the fellowship cultivated by the Epicureans was much the same as the communion of spirits fostered by the Church. Both creeds stressed the social virtues of mutual helpfulness, forbearance and forgiveness. The Epicureans distinguished very clearly between the inner life and the external life of circumstance; these correspond to the spiritual life and worldly life in Christian thought.

Both creeds also spoke of ignorance as darkness and knowledge as light, and both essayed to take the shudder out of death and deprive it of its sting. Hence the famous saying of Epicurus, "Death means nothing to us . . .". It is of course connected in a way to the Epicurean belief in gods. When you become like a god you do not fear death, as gods know no fear. For a Christian to show fear in the face of death is a sin, and a happy death is regarded as the true Christian death, although I must say this is in direct contradiction to Christ's own unhappy death in despair upon the cross at Calvary. The happy death was of course also the true Epicurean death. Both creeds were at one on that.

The two creeds were also singular in taking their names from their leaders and in pledging loyalty to those leaders, and both talked of following in the footsteps of the leaders. The two creeds also rejected the conventional education and founded their own schools, providing new texts. The Epicurean textbooks anticipated the textbooks composed by the Christians. In fact we can nearly be safe in saying that Epicureanism was a sort of Christianity without Christ, but not without Gods. The Epicurean never influenced the great world like the Stoics and Christians did; they had no wish to do that. All they desired was to be left alone to pursue their happiness. Like Christianity Epicureanism appealed to the world-weary, to slaves, and to those broken on the wheel of life. Even little children were made welcome in the garden of Epicurus outside Athens. Like Christ, Epicurus loved children, and like Christ he did not believe in sexual intercourse. "Sexual intercourse",

Epicurus declares, "has never done a man good and he is lucky if it has not harmed him". Even Lucretius follows him in denouncing sexual love. It was quite common for Greek materialists to do this. Democritus of Abdera said, "coition is a slight attack of apoplexy". Those Humanists who quote Epicurus to boost up their Humanism do so in complete ignorance of his philosophy.

Faith was a major factor in Epicureanism as it is in Christianity. Every disciple of Epicurus voluntarily took the pledge: "I will be faithful to Epicurus according to whom it has been my choice to live". Recently discovered archaeological evidence proves that even the honouring of Epicurus by the erection of herms devoted to deities was practised by Epicureans. It must also be remembered that Epicureans worshipped the popular gods of ancient Greece, and this was done because Epicurus thought all gods to be perfect. The Epicureans did not of course believe in the superstitions attached to the Greek gods, but they did believe in their existence.

Epicurus is the only Greek philosopher who defended the anthropomorphic interpretation of the gods. The Epicurean's gods lived in perfect happiness outside of the world, and did not interfere with the world. It would have been quite easy for an Epicurean to have turned a Christian. Both creeds promised a victory over death, the one by the denial of immortality, the other by the assertion of it. For Epicureans only the gods were immortal, Christianity went a step further and claimed man to be immortal. Epicurus like Christ was looked upon by his followers as a saviour, and indeed worshipped as such. In that sense and in many others I have mentioned Epicureanism helped to prepare the way for Christianity. Perhaps this short article will shed a little more light on Epicureanism in its relation to Christianity than has hitherto been shown in THE FREETHINKER.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

That there were similarities between some aspects of Epicureanism and some aspects of Christianity has never, so far as we know, been denied in THE FREETHINKER. And if these similarities happened to be with the better side of Christianity, this is no reflection on Epicureanism. It is a curious outlook that deplores love of children, the stressing of the social virtues of mutual helpfulness and forgiveness, or the association of ignorance with darkness.

It needs to be said, though, that Mr. Smith distorts both Epicureanism and Christianity to suit his case. Ignorance, for instance, meant different things to the Epicurean and the Christian and (without pursuing again with Mr. Smith the interminable argument about the shudder and sting of death) there is considerable difference between a mortal and an immortal view of man. The latter—related to the resurrection of Christ—was, of course, the central belief in Christianity. Above all, Christianity was a supernatural creed: Epicureanism a natural philosophy, and if Mr. Smith cannot see the difference, his outlook is even more curious than we thought.

TARGET ON BILLY GRAHAM

G. W. TARGET, the novelist, is writing a book about Billy Graham and the effect of his various crusades on the religious and social life of Great Britain. Mr. Target would be glad, he said in a letter to the *Observer* (3/10/65) to hear from anybody who responded to Dr. Graham's appeal but afterwards fell away.

Agnosticism

(Concluded from page 331)

as a good or evil spirit, and he was dreaded or loved because he was supposed to be capable of exerting a good or bad influence on human affairs. These are incontrovertible facts. No competent person seriously disputes them. Many of these gods have come down to us as fairies, goblins, etc., and many of them have died away altogether. The Agnostic has not the least hesitation in brushing aside whole galaxies of known or conceivable gods as figments of the imagination. He says they are the outcome of an unenlightened imagination, and I agree with him. By what rule does he dismiss these dethroned gods, and also all that are still ruling over very diminished territories, but still insist that he cannot deny the existence of something he knows not what, and would be in no better state of mind if he met it?

All my life I have been asking Agnostics to give me some justification for their "suspension of judgment". What is there on which we are to suspend? The Agnostic does pass judgment on the spirits he is told about, and in whom other people believe. Is there any better evidence, or any different evidence, for the probable existence of a spirit called God, than there is for another spirit who, instead of being called God, is called Mumbo-Jumbo? There is sincerity of belief with both these gods, and the evidence for the existence of each is of exactly the same character and quality. Why the differentiation? If I may paraphrase a line in Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*, whenever religion is concerned to be intelligible it is found out.

Still further. Less than two centuries ago the belief that men and women might hold intercourse with the devil was very generally held. Witchcraft was then a criminal offence, and many thousands of men, women, and children were tortured and killed for intercourse with devils, in whose existence there is the same religious and Christian warranty as there is for the existence of God. This belief in intercourse with devils was killed, for intelligent men and women, by the knowledge of the conditions that gave this belief being and authority. Yet one never heard an Agnostic say that he suspended judgment concerning that deposed god, Satan. Quite definitely he says with the Atheist that so soon as the origin and history of the belief in human intercourse with the spirit, Satan (God) was known and understood it was at once definitely rejected. He does not say I am agnostic on the subject of demoniacal possession. He says, I deny that any such being as Satan exists; he owes his existence to the imaginings of the uninstructed mind. The belief is condemned by its history.

And this is exactly what has happened to the gods. They have been found out. I do not mean that they have been found out in the sense in which we find out that someone is bad whom we have considered good, or as a liar one whom we thought truthful. The gods have been found out, as people discovered ghosts and fairies and demons to be mere "figments of the imagination". For the past three hundred years this idea concerning the gods has been gaining ground, and, with and since the publication of the epoch-making *Primitive Culture*, by E. B. Tylor, the gods have been tracked down and their origin exposed with a devastating accuracy. Such primitive peoples as exist have been carefully studied and the process of god-making has been fully exposed. The whole weight of modern scientific theory is thrown upon the side of the conviction that all gods, ancient and modern, savage and civilised, good and bad, have had their origin in the

uninstructed mind of man reading his own feelings into nature, personifying them, and then trembling before the creation of his own imagination. There are, of course, divergences of opinion as to the order of the different stages of this development, just as there are differences of opinion as to the precise nature and order of that organic evolution which traces the development of living matter from the simplest to the highest form. From all sides, from that of the study of culture in general, from the essential nature of such ceremonies as the Christian eating of the god, the incarnate god walking the earth as a man, the general conception of natural happenings as due to supernatural or superhuman beings, the whole of modern religion can be traced.

Now it is possible, although it would be supremely ridiculous at this time of day, for the Agnostic to repudiate the demonstrable findings of the anthropologists. But I have never met an Agnostic who takes up this position. With a lack of logic that runs the Christian Scientist very close for a front place in the race for the absurdity medal, what we find is an acceptance of the scientific account of the origin of the belief in gods, followed by an assertion that one must suspend judgment on the whole question as to whether gods exist. But if one really does accept the account of modern science concerning the *origin* of the belief in God, what is there left on which to express doubt? If all the facts of experience, subjective and objective, upon which primitive humanity built the belief in "spirits" are otherwise explained, the first interpretation is quite plainly ruled out of court. We cannot, at least we ought not, to accept a conclusion that follows from premises that are demonstrably false. If the mental hesitancy and illogicality displayed by the Agnostic in relation to the idea of God was manifested with regard to the ordinary affairs of life, existence would be impossible.

The Odium in Atheism

By GONZALO QUIOGUE (Manila)

GOD-BELIEVERS' aversion against atheism is so strong that atheists have to act accordingly. Disbelievers generally use various euphemisms in naming their respective groups. Some atheists call themselves secular humanists or naturalistic humanists. Other groups choose to be known variously as rationalists, freethinkers, ethicists, secularists, liberals, progressives, light-bringers and truth-seekers. These groups are just practical and human. They know that God-believers are hypersensitive to the word "atheist" or "atheism". The above euphemisms are not similarly offensive to the believers.

God-believers are people, too, who have feelings and are sensitive to criticisms levelled against their God and religion. Trying to convince them of the truth in godlessness and better living expounded in humanistic atheism is difficult, but not impossible.

Atheists consciously know there is no such being as God. But at the same time many of them share the God-believers' aversion against atheism. This condition happens if theism was embedded deeply into a child's subconscious mind. As the child grows into adulthood and naturalistic education, he realises in his conscious mind there is no God. But this fact is not pleasant to contemplate; atheism is a naked truth which must be clothed somehow. His reason has cleared his consciousness of a wrong belief; but his subconscious mind is

beyond the reach of his intellect, although the former serves as a repository of the conclusions of the latter. In due time, perhaps, as his atheistic knowledge is gradually stored in his subconscious side by side with his childhood theism, this sedimentary superstition will probably disappear for good and stop intruding into his conscious mind.

Many scientific and scholarly atheists do not want to be called atheistic humanists; they want to be known as "naturalistic humanists". Their attitude is understandable. They have to be practical. They live in a theistic community. We are all gregarious mammals. The community's approval or disapproval of our way of thinking affects our personality, social position and business connections. The impact on the theistic mind of "naturalistic humanist" is not instantly odious like "atheistic humanist".

Indeed, the naked reality of atheism has to be clothed with a euphemism, for we live among sensitive believers and tactful disbelievers. The claim that atheists should be courageously individualistic is easier said than done. The aversion against atheism will persist, unless we have the following conditions: 1. If godless scientists, scholars and thinkers will openly advocate atheism. 2. A majority of the population have become atheists.

CORRESPONDENCE

CATHOLIC-HUMANIST DIALOGUE

What bothers me most is not that Humanists should *talk* with the Roman Catholic Secretariat (I can think of several things I would like to say to it!) but that the Humanist organisations seem to consider it more important to talk with Catholics than to explain to their colleagues what they are up to. If, in fact, they have made it crystal clear that there can be no more co-operation between the Vatican and Humanist movements than, say, between the Labour and Colin Jordan's parties, then good luck to them. But what *did* they say? What was the point of it all? They cannot blame us for suspecting the worst if they consider it beneath them to help us to understand.

I deplore this sort of situation because it can only increase the gap between Humanists and Secularists, and I think the elimination of this gap is more important than the gap between Humanists and any Christians. But I want to know more details. Can the British Humanist Association explain to the readers of THE FREETHINKER or *The Humanist*, with as much courtesy as they explained to the Vatican Secretariat, what is on their minds? Co-existence is one thing. Co-operation between the fascist-anti-democratic-anti-feminist Vatican and any Secular Humanist organisation is, or ought to be, impossible. This is nothing whatsoever to do with relationships between individual Humanists and Roman Catholics. It is a matter of policy and the Humanist "image".

KIT MOUAT.

DR. WEATHERHEAD'S NEW BOOK

By all means let there be, in religious matters, more light, truth and honesty, and may the people be courageous enough to throw out the dead wood of ages past, when over-credulity and crass ignorance were the curse of humanity and impeded (since 325) its spiritual evolution.

The hierarchy of every denomination has known all along—and Humanists have said so for years—that the dogmas, with their pagan Trinity fable, were reason-insulting gibberish; that the crucifixion of a non-historical Jesus never took place, for it was an annual Egyptian mummery-play referring to the autumnal "death" of the Sungod whose light the "two thieves" (Anup and Aan) wanted to steal!

The fabricators of the New Testament never dreamt that, thanks to the Rosetta stone, scholars in the 19th and 20th century would be able to decipher the hieroglyphics on the walls of the Temple at Luxor and the papyri of the "Book of the Dead", and thus unveil the ecclesiastical frauds of the 3rd and 4th century!

Humanists have known all along that no Saviour was put to death who took upon himself "the sins of the world"; that the Virgin birth referred to the zodiacal sign Virgo, and had nothing to do with any woman; that the hocus-pocus of mass and communion were christianised versions of rather repulsive pagan rites (see Sir J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*) indulged in by primitive

tribes who imagined that it would give them strength if they consumed the "body and blood" of their religious victim.

Those immature, and far too trusting churchgoers who were enamoured with the above described religious candy-floss and loved those priestly bubble-gums, are now furious that they have been hoaxed all along the line!

And, the wicked and cruel deception played on them, rankles. But it was their own fault. They never challenged the silly fables of their faith and never questioned the authority of their priests and bishops, who could only sustain their spiritual hegemony through perpetuating the ignorance and superstition of their flocks.

Now, that Dr. Leslie Weatherhead has retired, he has joined the exclusive club of radicals and is prepared to make fun of those foolish and self-righteous churchgoers who—once upon a time—hung upon his utterances and swallowed his trivialities. His new book is entitled *The Christian Agnostic*—something of a contradiction in terms!

Yes, let there be more light and honesty, particularly amongst the top-brass of all denominations when, it is hoped, more deluded devotees will be blowing hot and cold about the wicked way in which they have been cruelly deceived; it should result in a good increase in the number of Church resignations and a corresponding increase in the number of Agnostics, Humanists and Secularists.

GEORGE R. GOODMAN.

VINCENT HALLINAN v. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

At least once a year Vincent Hallinan makes his reasoned attack against the Roman Catholic Church.

Hallinan, an atheist, who once was within a lisp of entering a seminary for the priesthood, changed his religious point of view after reading Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*.

Each year, Hallinan spends a day in court in which he tears church dogma apart as "utter nonsense" and shows how the clergy scares the gullible into trying to "bribe their way into Heaven" by leaving their fortunes to the Catholic Church.

The Hallinan blast occurs in his suit contesting the will of David F. Supple. Supple died at 81 and left most of his \$200,000 estate to Catholic charities, Hallinan has demanded that the Church officials reveal the precise geographical location of the Heaven, Hell and Purgatory they talk about.

This year in his speech to the court Hallinan declared that the idea of life after death with rewards (Heaven) and punishments (Hell) is a recent one, invented by the Catholic Church itself "long after the death of Christ".

He said that the Church teaches that when you give money to it you are paving your way to Heaven.

The court appearances cause too much local talk for the papers to totally ignore them. So this year the *San Francisco Chronicle* carried a brief report. It was buried at the bottom of the last page of its third section.

—*The Independent*, New York, August 1965

WITHOUT COMMENT

Now, more than before, you have discovered the Church. You are not on the margin of the Church, in a certain sense you are at its centre, its heart. For the Church loves the poor, the suffering, the disinherited, the abandoned . . .

—Pope Paul VI to the gipsies (*The Guardian*, 27/9/65)

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ABORTION LAW REFORM ASSOCIATION

The meeting to be held on October 14th, has been unavoidably cancelled.

Details of membership of the National Secular Society and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Telephone: HOP 2717.

The Freethinker

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THE point is sometimes made that one is too ready to criticise the Roman Catholic Church. It is suggested that freethinkers and others who are definitely and emphatically anti-clerical are over-ready to find fault and not to point out the benefits of the Papal Church to humanity at large. This criticism has recently been made of the present writer and it is suggested that he lacks personal acquaintance with the Roman Church and that he is too ready to make ill-informed criticisms of it. A consideration of this criticism has led him to set forth some of his free-thinking charges against the Roman Catholic Church in the form of an indictment of its effects upon practical life.

I indict the Roman Catholic Church because it claims an infallibility of doctrine. At first sight, this may appear to be a matter for Roman Catholics themselves. It may appear to be of little moment that the Council of Trent, supported by the Vatican Council of 1870, decreed the Church to be infallible. Yet, a consideration of the result of this belief within the field of toleration will illustrate its results for human life. An infallible body holds the sole truth necessary for human salvation. It is therefore entitled to stamp out error. As a result, it has a black record for persecution and intolerance. It is possible to recall the Marian persecutions in England to recall a policy stained with blood. But it is also possible to recall the persecutions of French Huguenots or, more recently, the wartime record of the Roman Catholic Church in Yugoslavia or the persecution of Protestants in Spain. Viewed at the national level, the Church is an intolerant and persecuting body, a fact underlined by the recent history of toleration in Spain and the Iberian Peninsula generally.

Ignorant Arrogance

I indict the Roman Catholic Church because it pursues its intolerant policy at the local and personal level. The conception of "No faith with heretics" may be one which is not officially taught as a dogma. But one has only got to enter into personal relationships with individual Roman Catholics to witness the psychological effects of a belief acted upon and commonly held. As individuals, they are usually to be distinguished by their tight-lipped bigotry and their ignorant arrogance. Wherever they enter, as into the state education system, trouble may be expected. It is a fact known to the present writer that the "no faith with heretics" idea has to be pursued to a length whereby individual Roman Catholics will attempt to secure the dismissal of Protestant or freethinking employees, frequently using underhanded means to seek to achieve their end. We have known this happen both in the educational world and elsewhere. One need not look only to the Roman Catholic rabbit-warrens to be found in the slums of Glasgow or Liverpool to justify the remark. Again, the claim of Catholic belief that the Church possesses an infallible doctrinal basis has led inevitably in practice at a time of change to a reckless indifference to truth as a whole. As Dr. G. G. Coulton pointed out again and again, there is

a marked and lasting difference between "Catholic truth" and "historical truth". Cardinal Gasquet or Fr. Thurston, SJ did not stand alone among Catholic historians who were wont to adapt their facts as it might suit them so to do. Indeed, it is a great pity that Dr. Coulton's many pamphlets upon the subject are now out of print and unobtainable. The freethought movement might do far worse than to bring some of them back into circulation. Such medieval

trades as those rooted in forged decretals or title deeds or in faked relics have emerged in the modern world into similar faking of fact where historical justification is needed for the Church's claims. A very good example was to be found some thirty years ago

in the efforts of the Westminster Catholic Federation to secure unhistorical and doctored changes in the school history books. It is merely a fact that an examination of this controversy over the years will justify the remark of the distinguished Unitarian divine, Dr. Martineau, that there is one grace which the Roman Catholic Church always fails to reach and it is the grace of veracity.

Pressure Groups

I indict the Roman Catholic Church because of its effects upon society generally. As it stands in relationship to the outside world, it works as a semi-secret society pursuing its own ends. It would be a good thing if more non-Roman Catholics knew of the existence and the activities of such bodies as the Knights of St. Columbus or of the Challenor Club. It is difficult to believe that they would be satisfied with the social effects of Roman Catholic pressure groups upon society generally. This pressure which the Church exercises generally is extended to such fields as education where Roman Catholicism has claimed completely undemocratic advantages by a demand for the right to contract out of the state system. It has been seen in the influence which the Church seeks to wield in the political field through the creation of pressure groups of members of Parliament, local councillors and the like. As is well known to readers of THE FREETHINKER, it is to be seen in the activities of the Roman Catholic Church in opposition to demands for family planning material to be circulated publicly and advice given where it is desired. Reform of the laws concerning abortion and divorce have become matters of public interest, but any activity in these directions is forced to withstand the bitter opposition of the Roman Catholic Church. Not content with legislating for its own members, this Church is only too anxious to impose its authoritarianism wherever it can secure its will.

I indict the Roman Catholic Church for its policy over mixed marriages. It may be perfectly true that the *Ne Temere* decree of 1907 did not apply to England. This concession was not due to Christian charity but to the far more certain fact that there is a law of criminal libel in this country, that the English legal system does not recognise the existence of the so-called Canon Law and that the writ of an English court of justice could even reach a Roman Catholic bishop. But it is a fact that stringent

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

I Indict the Papists

By F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

conditions are laid down concerning the marriage and that a failure to obey these conditions or to be married before a Roman Catholic priest means that one is not married in the eyes of the Church. Readers of Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock* will recall that the point arises in the novel. But it may also be recalled that it is not unknown for priests in the less literate districts to pervert this canonical statement into a statement that the two people are merely not married, with the consequent upset and unhappiness which such a slanderous statement could create. Many years ago, it was activity of this type which led to a controversy between the Anglican Bishop David of Liverpool and the Roman Catholic Archbishop Downey, a controversy which led at least one observer to remark that, whilst Dr. David argued like an English gentleman, Dr. Downey argued like a Roman Catholic priest. The time has arrived when it should be made a criminal offence for anybody to claim that there is anything wrong in any way with any marriage which is recognised by the laws of England. It is the Common Law of England, the Royal law, and not the bastard Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church which controls the English scene. It should be strengthened in order to deal firmly with persons who behave in this manner.

Crime

Above all, I indict the Roman Catholic Church because it has produced the Roman Catholics of England. There are a certain number of exceptions to any generalised statement but I am bound to look upon the communities of Papists as they exist in England today. In many cases, they compose the most ignorant classes within the community. They make a contribution to the crime rate, both at the adult and the juvenile level, out of all proportion to their numbers. The chairman of the London Sessions, Mr. R. E. Seaton, remarked some years ago on the extent to which crime in London was due to Irish immigrants and it must never be forgotten that these immigrants are Roman Catholic to a man. A great deal is said by Roman Catholics concerning their battle for strict and traditional sex morals, but they keep quiet about the bastardy rates among their own women. A disregard for truth at the academic level is illustrative of a more general disregard where non-Catholics be concerned. Intolerant arrogance is the order of the day. One cannot forget that, some years ago in his book, *The Faith of a Catholic*, the late Mgr. R. A. Knox remarked that it was the duty of Protestants to tolerate Catholics since toleration was part of their creed. There was no like provision in Catholic belief so that Catholics are under no duty to tolerate Protestants. It is this illiberal bigotry which illustrates the situation in Spain, Portugal and other Roman Catholic countries today.

Wake up, John Bull, your freedom is at stake so far as this issue be concerned! The country is flooded with priests, monks and nuns. They claim prerogatives out of all proportion to their real numbers. A sect of dissenters possessing high but self-styled titles are demanding special privileges which can only lead in the end to the sacrifice of democratic liberty at the hands of the Papal Church. John Bull made a bad mistake when in 1829, he passed the Catholic Emancipation Act. He was giving an official recognition to a foreign pontiff not invariably friendly to the government of this country. The result is that the Roman Catholic has a divided allegiance and is ready to follow the crypto-fascist policies of the Papacy. A very good example is to be seen in the support given during the Spanish Civil War by the Roman Catholic Church in England to the murderous banditry of General Franco. As Lord Brookeborough once remarked of the Northern

Irish situation, ninety-nine per cent of Roman Catholics are disloyal. One has only to recall that this situation exists in England today within a position where Catholics are in a minority. Imagination boggles at the position which would come about if these people attained a majority within the English secular state. The situation is not one which can be dealt with by old-fashioned Protestant methods, for the rise of liberal rationalism has undercut the authority of the Protestant theology. The vagueness of religious ethicists or reverant agnostics is worse than useless and it may even lead them to go cap in hand to the Vatican for discussion and recognition. A fighting and militant freethought movement seeing the Roman Catholic Church as a curse within European civilisation can alone provoke sufficient militancy in response to claims which are unhistorical, frequently anti-social and in some cases wholly immoral when measured by the decencies of a democratic society.

Religion in US Schools

THE UNITED STATES Supreme Court in the *Schempp* case removed the notion that religion in the public school curriculum is forbidden. The decision made clear that responsible teaching about religion is a legitimate concern of the schools. This is a challenge to the schools to search for appropriate means to deal effectively with religion as one of history's greatest influences on the lives of men. Many have not done this, but some are cautiously and conscientiously exploring the Court's invitation to teach objectively about religion.

In Fort Wayne, Indiana, for example, 30 South Side High School seniors enrolled in "The Bible as Literature", an elective course added for the second semester of the 1964-65 school year. The course quickly spread to about 20 Indiana public high schools.

Several Pennsylvania school districts asked the advice of the State Department of Public Instruction on establishment of Bible courses during the 1965-66 school year. The Lewistown School District proposed to schedule two courses — one on the "Development of Religions" for grades 9 through 12, and the other on "Lives of Great Religious Leaders" for grades 7 through 9. Upper Darby Senior High School was expected to give a course on "Bible History and Literature".

The Board of Education of the Bath-Richfield School District in Bath, Ohio, has adopted a statement of principles which permits the teaching of religion in subject areas (literature, history) provided it is objective and that no indoctrination accompanies the instruction. According to the adopted policy, "The American heritage cannot be understood or appreciated without knowledge of the great religious and church influences."

Bible readings are permissible along with readings of poetry, essays, and other great literature. Prayers may not be a part of the directed school programme, but "spontaneous expressions of devotion" will not be suppressed.

Members of the senior class will be granted use of school property for baccalaureate programmes, which they will be permitted to sponsor; but attendance must be voluntary, and the school board will incur no financial obligation.

Board President James S. Jackson explained to Americans United the reasoning behind the baccalaureate policy: "The board agreed that we could no longer officially sponsor the baccalaureate service nor pay the

(Concluded on page 340)

Playing Games

By F. H. SNOW

ACCORDING to my observation, the outstanding feature of human society is its great restlessness. Urgency expresses itself everywhere. To kill time, fill time, is the chief concern—after that of getting a living—of the majority of persons, and a multiplicity of pursuits engages their leisure, in order to appease the demon of unrest.

Religions found fertile soil in which to spread their roots, in those ancient times when amenities were scarce. Nowadays those roots get much less nourishment, in spite of many sedulous gardeners. Superstition has largely lost its savour as means of expelling boredom, and modern knowledge, though obstructed as far as possible by its religious opponents, has been the major force in its dethronement as sovereign salve. Though a good many continue to rely on pious observances, far more get up to all manner of "worldly" diversions. As I see it, the whole human family, save a particular class of idiot, indulges in some game or hobby—dress it up in what other terms one will—where-with to assuage its occupational thirst.

What, in simple language, are the religious bodies engaged in but glorified pastimes? These differ from each other, but are basically the same antidote for the restlessness inherent in mankind. While the bulk of civilised peoples divert themselves secularly, the devoutly religious have their special form of entertainment, although they do not, of course, acknowledged it as such. But what are religious observances, providing consolation and mental refreshment, but recreative media? Their practisers gratify their egos as do those who seek secular satisfactions, and are participants in a mighty, if largely unfashionable hobby.

To my mind, this game-playing is most strikingly illustrated by the Salvation Army. The uniformed members of this organisation, marching to the beat of the big drum and the blowing of cornets, impress me as big children enjoying a favourite game. It's a little pathetic to see them standing in a circle in the street, trumpeting away and singing of Jesus to an audience of one or two, or of none. How can it fail to penetrate into their heads, I wonder, that they are just performing for themselves—that all their dressing up, drum banging, trumpeting and preaching for so little, is a hollow farce, and that their belief in an almighty Lord who would suffer such nonsense is one huge absurdity.

They appear incapable of any such thought. Wrapped up in their sublime game, with its brigadiers, colonels, majors and captains (sergeants and corporals are curiously missing from this imitation army), they continue to play at soldiers, with the prospect of bliss in the sky at the end of their service, and thoroughly enjoy themselves, having gloriously solved the problem of banishing care by unloading it on their Blessed Redeemer.

An what a game our Catholic friends have, with their rosaries, statues, confessionals, indulgencies, masses and terribly fascinating ritual. They have a king with three crowns on his head, and hosts of saints looking down from Heaven, able to work wonders for the asking. There's plenty to keep them interested, and they don't have to do anything about it with their brains.

The great diversity of means by which the demon of unrest is exorcised makes an absorbing study. A lot of people in this land spend an extraordinary amount of time at Bingo; a vast number watches television programmes; cars and coaches transport multitudes on outings; sport figures largely in the minds of millions. Almost everyone

has a time-filling hobby. The Bingo addict with eyes glued on the numbered card, the angler, plying rod and line, the hiker, the television fan, public-house habitue, excursionist, all derive pleasurable reinforcement against insidiously attacking boredom along with the mystic and conventional religionist. The latter, indeed runs with the hare and hounds when so inclined, and augments his spiritual palliative with secular ones.

The Atheist falls, least of all, into the category of those who have need to numb their irksomeness with alluring expedients. He has rejected the religious soporific on deliberate grounds—gone against it not through indifference or unreasoning prejudice, or instinctive preference for the comforts materialism affords, but because of carefully considered objections to unscientific belief. His philosophy has been acquired through ruthless self-analysis and hostility to the objectively incredible in all fields of thought. The humanities are his paramount concern, and furnish him with ample mental exercise. His essential reflectiveness fortifies him, in great degree, against restless urges. Least of all types, I think, he has need to resort to time-killing diversions although, from my knowledge of Atheist friends, he is by no means insensitive to the normal pleasures. I would absolve the great majority of his kind from needing to get a "kick" out of something. Fearless introspection governs the Atheist's moods, and his commitment to the campaign for world emancipation from superstitious faiths and their hindrance of human reforms, is hardly of the nature of a pastime.

I am not competent to pronounce on the delights of Bingo, but it seems to me that lovers of that absorbing, if scarcely brainy game, television watchers, public-house haunters, fresh-air zealots, awheel and afoot, and participants in the many other secular pastimes, still the worm of unrest to no less profit than the uniformed automatons that blare their trumpets to invisible audiences and shout salvation to unheeding ears. It seems to me that the ordinary man, minding his own business and enjoying his simple relaxations, makes a greater contribution to international brotherhood than missionising churchianity, immersed in its age-old diversion of shuttering the people's eyes against the searchlight of reason, with regard to its vaunted God.

But still, humanity in general lacks a stabilising philosophy, and until the intellect of its swarming millions is educationally developed, will incompletely cope with its inherent restlessness. Until, equipped with the faculty of objective thinking; of honest self-examination; of unremitting opposition to both religious and secular sophistry; of total acceptance of the arbitrament of reason—in short until able to avail himself of the rationalist armoury against the unintelligent pressures bequeathed him through centuries of mental misbreeding, the normal person will fail to realise the full potential of the outstanding intelligence on our speck in the universe, and extract the major benefit from his amenities.

Not only so, but the superstitions that have come down from the dark ages will receive continuous incentive to impose themselves on modernity. Complacent ignorance will furnish personnel for religion's games. Salvationists will trumpet, votary candles burn, supplicants kneel before statues and altars, prayer-wheels whirl, for many generations, unless the voice of freethought can be brought to the ordinary man's ear, clearly and strongly.

(Continued on page 343)

This Believing World

BERNARD BRADEN gave us in *On the Braden Beat*, (ATV October 2nd) a delightful parody of the four Biblical Professors answering viewer's questions; and, just as they did he demolished Christianity with every answer. The show was good enough to make faithful Christians very, very angry, for if there is one thing which their religion cannot stand, it is being laughed at! Can't we have more of these parodies?

★

THE visit of the Pope to the USA was a triumph, not for Christianity, as some people think, but for the publicity experts in the Vatican. It more than put the Pope on the map, especially his plea for peace which was delivered in such a way as to give one the impression that he was the first man who made it. But if one reflects upon this clever advertisement for the Vatican, one is forced to ask whatever did that institution do in the past for peace? What is it doing now except uttering platitudes?

★

ALTHOUGH hundreds of millions of people must have undergone it in the past, the Bishop of Woolwich, Dr. John Robinson, (*South London Press*, 1/10/65) has only just found out that there is "hidden uncertainty" about the question of confirmation. Now we learn that Dr. Robinson has always suspected that "we confirm too many people". Stout unbelievers like us—and many who are not unbelievers—have never really found out what confirmation ever does except give the clergy a little more unnecessary work. Incidentally, most of the inmates of our prisons must have been confirmed at one time or another, and what good did it do them?

★

THE writer of the London *Evening News* "Saturday Reflection" has discovered (25/9/65) that St. Matthew who was, according to Holy Writ, a "publican", was actually "what we now call a white collar worker". In the Gospels, he is not actually shown in a pub, but "at the receipt of custom"—a distinction only understood by a thoroughgoing Christian. However, Matthew invited his fellow tax-collectors to "a great feast" in honour of Jesus, and with that inimitable turn of phrase which makes "our Lord" so great, Jesus insisted that he "came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance". And what does this prove? Why simply that "our Lord disregarded public opinion". Why? "In order to draw such people closer to their heavenly Father". Yet even these days, people resist the trip to their "Heavenly Father" for as long as they can.

★

WILL it be believed? At a school's morning assembly two pop records were played instead of prayers and hymns (*Daily Mirror*, 30/9/65). And the impudence of doing such a thing was made greater because the mighty BBC itself had actually banned one of the records. One of the governors of the school described the affair as "appalling". In spite of this, another governor declared he would stand by the headmaster. But what would the students who are never consulted say? They would rather, we are sure, prefer to hear one pop record than a hundred fervent prayers.

★

OVER a hundred miniature bottles of whisky, gin, vodka and brandy were we learn from an unidentified newspaper cutting—"blessed at the altar of the 1,000-year-old St. Michael's Church at St. Albans (Herts)" on October 10th. They were the gifts of licensees in the town, who held a special service to coincide with the church's harvest festival. And two licensees read the lessons. The miniatures will,

we are informed, "be added to the harvest produce to be distributed to old people in the parish". But why only miniature bottles? Is a Christian licensee's spirit of charity under-proof?

RELIGION IN U S SCHOOLS

(Concluded from page 338)

minister. However, if a class on its own initiative may hold a dance, a play, or a basketball game why may not the seniors hold their own service prior to commencement? . . . Obviously, attendance must not be required."

Perhaps one of the most creative and ambitious programmes in the country is that conducted by a high school English teacher in Newton, Massachusetts, Thayer S. Warshaw. He has introduced the Bible as "a source book for the humanities".

Professor Warshaw declares: "A knowledge of the Bible is essential to the pupil's understanding of allusions in literature, in music, and in the fine arts; in news media, in entertainment, and in cultured conversation."

His procedure is simple. Three times a week the pupils have reading assignments from some portion of the Bible. Two ground rules apply: interpretation must not be discussed, and the King James Version will be used because of its familiarity.

In discussions of the Bible passages the pupils hear about John Steinbeck's Nobel prize-winning *The Pearl*; Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*; John Milton's *Paradise Lost*; Ernest Hemingway's Nobel prize-winning *The Old Man and the Sea*; Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, with its Ishmael, Ahab, and Elijah; William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom*; Marc Connelly's *Green Pastures*; and scores of other great works.

The classes also learn the origin of such expressions as "the patience of Job", "a doubting Thomas", "a Nimrod", "a Judas", "a Jonah", "a Lazar", "an Ananias", and "Adam's apple".

Pupils hear music ranging from Negro spirituals and folk songs to oratorios like Handel's *Messiah*. There are "canvasses by Titian, Rubens, Veronese, Tiepolo, Rembrandt, El Greco, Murillo, Brueghel, and Bosch; murals by Michelangelo, Donatello, del Verrocchio, and Bernini; reliefs by Brunelleschi and Ghiberti; engravings by Dürer, Doré, and Lucas van Leyden; and movie stills of a Hollywood Biblical epic." All these art forms require some Biblical knowledge for a full appreciation.

At the end of the study the pupils are given a chance to express themselves on paper. One wrote: "Today especially, when the Bible — and whether to read it in schools — is seemingly forever in and out of courts in our country, how can a person form an intelligent opinion if he doesn't even know what is inside the covers? Since the laws of our land are based in part on those in Scripture, doesn't it seem reasonable that it would profit a person to study the Book [the Bible] that has had such an effect on our country?"

[Reprinted from *Church and State*, September 1965]

REVISED VERSION

Because of the late harvest the congregation at the parish church at Ladock, near Truro, Cornwall, refused to sing the line of the hymn "All is safely gathered in" at their harvest festival service. Instead, by agreement with the vicar, the Rev. Edwin Urquhart, they sang "Some is safely gathered in".

—*Sunday Express* (10/10/65)

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Bristol Humanist Group (Kelmescott, 4 Portland Street, Clifton), Sunday, October 24th, 7.45 p.m.: Informal Discussion.

Kingston and Surbiton Branches NSS (The White Hart Hotel, Kingston Bridge), Friday, October 22nd, 8 p.m.: Mrs. A. J. WALKER, "Freethought in Poetry".

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, October 24th, 6.30 p.m.: B. B. PINDER, "More Holiday Pictures".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, October 24th, 7.30 p.m.: Professor HYMAN LEVY, "The American Situation".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, October 24th, 11 a.m.: LORD SORESEN, "Democracy on Trial".

Tuesday, October 26th, 7.30 p.m.: NORMAN SHEPPARD, "Education for Responsibility and Good Conscience".

Notes and News

HUMANISTS, said Professor A. J. Ayer, President of the British Humanist Association, in a BBC interview on October 9th, are trying to solve the great human problems of our time, and there was no necessary reason why they should not co-operate with Christians and others who were working for the same ends. But he was opposed to the tenets of the Christian faith because he believed them to be false. Humanism was, in fact, a belief in the sufficiency of human reasoning as the basis of personal and social life, and a refusal to rely on belief in the existence of God. It was not negative, though Humanists were certainly opposed to theological belief. The basis of Humanism was positive: a belief in man's capacity to live a good life and help others to do so. The interview, with Kenneth Harris, was the first of a series of six to be broadcast on Saturday mornings.

★

So WE were not entirely alone in being unimpressed by Pope Paul VI's address to the United Nations! It reminded the nominally Roman Catholic editor of the *New Statesman*, Paul Johnson, of a speech by Sir Anthony Eden: "it said the right things in a totally unmemorable way". Indeed the only point at which the Pope "departed from universally accepted clichés was in his reference to birth control, where he appeared to come down on the

side of the reactionaries" (8/10/65). The suggestion that we should increase food supplies rather than limit births was, Mr. Johnson said, "one of the hoariest fallacies of our time. We have to do both simultaneously". Moreover, the Pope's rejection of birth control was "inconsistent with his plea for peace". Population increase is "a primary cause of international tension".

★

THE POPE might reply that people should use the so-called "natural" methods of birth control, but these were far too complicated. And Mr. Johnson recalled that an American Catholic lady was "so worried by her inability to practice the complex 'rhythm' method that she suffered a recurrent dream in which a cardinal sat on the end of her bed working a set of traffic lights!"

★

TROG's cartoon in the *Observer* (10/10/65) showed two Catholic prelates—one Chinese—against the background of the Vatican and with the Pope in the foreground. "And if the Holy Father *does* go to China", the Chinese prelate was saying, "it should help him make up his mind about birth control".

★

COME to think of it, Michael Frayn, Trog's colleague on the *Observer*, was another who was unimpressed by Pope Paul's speech. "I'm glad the Pope's against war", Mr. Frayn wrote. "Because so am I, and so is Horace Morris, and so are quite a number of other people I know". All the same he thought it only fair to point out that the Pope was not the first to declare himself in favour of peace. The TV actor Patrick McGeehan had done so in the *TV Times* but "by some fluke" he missed the headlines.

★

SOME *New Statesman* readers—one non-Catholic—had, we noted a fortnight ago, objected to Mr. Johnson's image of the Pope's hand reaching for the hot line to the Holy Ghost. Michael D. White of Paris, in a letter to the paper (8/10/65) found it disturbing that a non-Catholic should be upset by the remark which "tasteless or not" was true. According to Catholic dogma, Mr. White pointed out, the Pope can speak infallibly on faith or morals and "it is odd that he should be reluctant to avail himself of this facility" to make a pronouncement on birth control. But Mr. White's second point was more serious: "Apart from the *New Statesman*, there seems to be no public forum in which any criticism or confutation of the Catholic Church can now be made". There ought not, Mr. White said, "to be any more danger from the Catholic Church in England than there is from the Communist Party" but Catholic influence seemed to be growing and the position would only be healthy "so long as the Pope is taken no more seriously by non-Catholics than 'Uncle Joe' or 'Mr. K' were by non-communists".

★

THERE were only 9,000 Muslims in this country in 1889, when the Begum Shah Jehan gave £15,000 for a British mosque in Woking, Surrey. Now, mainly due to post-war immigration, the number is 175,000. Another mosque is planned for a site in Regent's Park presented by King George VI in 1944, but it has not yet materialised. One design was rejected by the Royal Fine Arts Commission in the 1950s because it clashed with the Nash terraces. Recently, the *Sunday Times* reported (10/10/65) that the Malaysian and Pakistani High Commissioners and the Ambassadors of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Republic (who comprise the planning sub-committee of the Central London Mosque) had decided to throw open for competition the design for the new mosque. So a minaret may yet rise over the trees in Regent's Park.

The Enigma of Morality

By LEON SPAIN
(USA)

CONTROVERSIAL expressions have recently been given "voice" in THE FREETHINKER pertaining to the pros and cons of the matter of morality, with particular emphasis upon Christian morality—or what is popularly acknowledged to be Christian morality. And while Christian theology, in its cardinal dogmas and ramifications, has been laid to rest, at least among many professed Rationalists, Atheists, Agnostics and Freethinkers, the ghost of Christianity, in its "moral guise", arises for more or less posthumous justification, and also, to cause controversy among the Rationalist fraternity of the present day.

I cannot claim to pass criticism upon the pros and cons of Christian morality with calm, Olympian detachment, and without a vestige of partiality. But from my point of vantage I feel that what is commonly called Christian morality will be more difficult to put to rest than the body of dogma from which supposedly it emanated. It seems, further, that the acknowledged preachments of Christianity are not merely the social stock-in-trade of conventional spokesmen for Christianity, but that many who profess the Rationalist attitude are to some degree bedevilled by the time-honoured shibboleths and mottoes of Judaeo-Christian morality.

I believe, however, that the esteem which undoubted Rationalists have evinced, at least for some aspects of Christian morals and ethics, is a hold-over from childhood indoctrination, or from ideas which they have imbibed from the context of their social environment. Early childhood training exercises an unconscious influence, and sentimental attachments instilled early in life are hard to dispense with. A professed Atheist of my acquaintance experiences what he terms "a nostalgia and sentimental reflex" when he visits the scenes of his childhood and early upbringing. I feel that I am fortunate when I say that I had few, if any, childhood preconceptions to abandon with regard to Sunday school or religious morality, or the principal aspects of religious dogmas which are overtly or subtly indoctrinated during childhood, and even throughout life.

Theologians, in many instances and among the highest rank, candidly admit that their basic dogmas and tenets have been undermined with the inexorable march of verified knowledge and discovery; but they aim to keep the domain of what they term morals and ethics forever in their stewardship. They are the temporal means of conveyance of divine revelation, at least in regard to man's relationship to his fellow man, and the duties and obligations which he owes "his Creator", "the Infinite", or "the Absolute". Just how these terrestrial mortals have arrogated to themselves the super-human function of being the pipe-lines to the Infinite or the Absolute, will be better left for them to explain; but it is difficult for me to conceive—with my human limitations—what information, spurious or authentic derived from the Infinite or Absolute would be of any value with respect to human relationships in all their diversity.

However, just as the theologians have relinquished their monopoly in expounding upon the founding of the universe, and the interpretations of many of its functions, so they will be compelled to relinquish their credentials as being the custodians of official morality. But it must not be overlooked that, while our current crop of theological authorities are, by and large, laying principal stress upon

the greater need for "Christian morals and ethics", more than a little dose of theological superstition is held in store for the uncritical, unwary, or anyone else who is receptive to it.

Christian morality is the morality, *par excellence*, of the ideal of celibacy, total human self-denial, and complete scorn for the body and its needs. It is wrong to regard it as the initiator and prompter of the sex ethic of monogamy, although Christianity is always seemingly credited with this. The interpolations which modern spokesmen for Christianity are rendering in its behalf, with regard to the issue of sex, are nothing more than the interpretations and pronouncements of a more enlightened day and age, and are not to be found in Christian doctrines from its earliest days and growth. Christian morals, divorced from its antiquated sex ethic, cannot be justified as a social doctrine. For just as it put a blight upon the relationship of the sexes during the height of its social power, so it has rendered a distinct disservice to the evolution of human society by its alleged "eternal decrees", and the supercilious and dictatorial attitude of its official spokesmen.

The Ten Commandments, which have been held forth as the foundation of all future ethical codes, were most conducive to an early static society. And fulsome praise of the Sermon on the Mount is just as nonsensical as the contents of the Sermon itself. It is ridiculous in its essence, and would be more ridiculous if it were ever applied. The Sermon on the Mount can hardly be said to extol the finer traits of human character, and could, if put into complete practice, well-nigh cause individual disintegration of character, and be further conducive to the fullest inroads of crime in modern society. It is, I feel, more than a little mistaken to say that Christianity enhanced human dignity and promoted mutual respect among men and women, for, among other things, it did not condemn slavery, it held women in the most abject inferiority and contempt, and has done more than its share to promote dissension and strife since its official establishment.

Christian morals, it cannot be denied, have always had undertones and overtones of the morality of Mrs. Grundy. It was so pre-occupied with the Puritanical aspects of sex, that it had nothing else to offer in the way of guidance in human affairs. In the minds of most people, morals are principally, or entirely, identified with matters pertaining to sexual relationships and the conditions under which these are accordingly governed. I feel there is a vast area of thought dealing with the "hows", "oughts", and "shoulds" of human relationships, and that that aspect of human relationships dealing with sexual affairs is only a part—and perhaps a small part—of the total. There is no denying that a wholesome and sounder sex ethic is both desirable and necessary in an evolving industrial civilisation, but official Christianity, has nothing constructive to offer.

Perhaps it could be facetiously commented that the founders of Christianity and their numerous spokesmen, in their revelatory delusions and misunderstood physiological promptings, were receiving erroneous pipe-line information from the Infinite and the Absolute, in their dogmatic preachments of an absolute sex ethic or morality, applicable to all places and time. But progress will be made in the total sphere of human relations, and its basic causes will be secular.

The Emperor's Clothes of Theology

By GREGORY S. SMELTERS

DO YOU remember the sartorial quacks in Hans Andersen's fairy-tale about "The Emperor's Clothes"? They painstakingly went through all the motions of wearing and making wonderful invisible clothes for the emperor to wear, and when they had finally dressed him up, and all the courtiers present were unctuously pretending to admire the garments, only a small child cried out, "The emperor is naked!"

For two millenia the Hebrew-Christian theologians have been going through all the identical motions—verbal, written, printed processes of describing and demonstrating their invisible article, "God". It is only now that, for the first time in the history of Christianity, a theologian shouts to his own brethren the obvious truth, "You're naked!", and wants them to be ridiculed by professional comedians!

The theologian is Dr. Thomas J. J. Altizer, Professor of Bible and Religion at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia; and in his contribution to *New Theology*, No. 1 (Edited by M. E. Marby and D. G. Peerman, New York: Macmillan) he writes: "The doctrine of God is the 'Emperor's Clothes' of modern theology, and it is a pity that no ironist has arisen to portray the nakedness of our own theologians".

All the 33 articles collected in two booklets (Nos. 1 and 2)—paperbacks by the editors of *The Christian Century* (USA) from current international work in theology and allied fields—perfectly illustrate the analogy with Andersen's fairy-tale. Starting with the first article, "How is Theology Possible?" by Professor John Macquarrie of Glasgow University, and ending with the last one, "Christ and Christ Figure in American Fiction", by Dr. R. Detweiler of Florida University, they all go through the complicated verbal weaving about "God"; but the god they all mean is the god of the Jewish-Christian Bible, the West Semitic god Yahweh (alias Jehovah) who incarnated himself into a Jew, called Yehoshuah the Anointed (Jesus the Christ) by the aid of his own breath-soul, called the Holy Ghost. "The God of Jesus and of His followers is indeed Yahweh of Moses and of Israel" (*Hebrew Religion*, by Oesterley and Robinson, SPCK, London, 1952).

The "Emperor's Clothes" is, then, the god Yahweh (alias Jesus), but—like the quacks and the courtiers in the fairy-tale—all the theologians pretend that their invisible article, "God", is not a myth of the Middle Eastern folklore.

A semantic muddle started two millenia ago with the translation of the Hebrew phrase *Yahweh ha-elohim* which meant "the mighty one Yahweh", into the Greek Septuagint as *Kyrios ho theos* ("Lord the god") and later into the Latin Vulgate as *Dominus Deus* ("Lord God"), ending up in European Bible versions as "the Lord God". So all this "god-talk" was rooted only in Greek and Latin, "god" there being a term for the highest rank of mythical beings, possessing a proper name. But the Hebrew *elohim* meant not "gods", but *all* mythical beings without distinction: gods, goddesses, angels, devils, demons, giants, ghosts (see *Oxford Hebrew-English Lexicon*). It was the influx of Gentiles into the Jewish-Christian Church that necessitated the introduction of a Trinitarian confession at baptism (Matthew 28, 19), whereas for a Jew whose belief in the Father Yahweh and Yahweh's *ruah* (breath-soul, or Holy Ghost) could be taken for granted, the con-

fession that Jesus was a heavenly "Anointed" sent by Yahweh had sufficed.

But this "Emperor's Clothes" illusion is not the only fallacy which makes "a distinction between godly and godless men, i.e. between those who believe in God revealed in Jesus Christ and those who do not so believe" (*New Theology* No. 2). All the theologians assume and talk of their omniscient and omnipotent "God", but again all pretend that *omniscient* does not cancel out *omnipotent*, as is obviously the case.

The sense of omniscience implies an eternal, unchangeable course of absolutely all events in the universe, including all the behaviour of the fancied omniscient being himself who allegedly knows all past, present, and future events. If his knowledge is true, then everything is bound to happen exactly as was truly foreknown, and nothing can be logically altered. The omniscient being himself is bound to be an automaton, helplessly following out his own foreknowledge about himself. He is not omnipotent to alter his true foreknowledge. Thus by the logic of the dogma of Yahweh's omniscience there unescapably follows that all worship and prayers are utterly useless, since absolutely nothing can be altered in the course of whatever is happening. But it is exactly the revenue from worship and prayers that sustains the Church; and the realisation among believers of their utter futility will speedily end organised religion among thinking people. Professor Nielsen (*New Theology*, No. 1) claims, too, that "Atheistic religion is irrational and therefore ought to be abandoned"!

I have outlined only two basic challenges of modern society to Christian religion. Further challenges are that "existence" is nothing at all if not existence in space-time-matter, since the opposite of "something-somewhere-sometime" is "nothing-nowhere-never"; and that "God" is a label whose referent is another label "Yahweh", or "Zeus", etc., which in turn have no referents at all in the universe. The theologians ignore these distinctions, and fallacies result.

This does not mean that *New Theology* Nos. 1 and 2 are not worthy of diligent study by Secularists. The articles are lively, interesting, startling, but their interest is all the sort the motions of those sartorial quacks could have claimed; the interest in studying a clever sleight-of-hand of a variety-show magician.

PLAYING GAMES

(Continued from page 339)

Let us recognise that without the accession of enormous funds to the secular societies, this can not be brought about. One dedicated millionaire, financing the gratis introduction of rationalist publications to our vast community, would strikingly change the face of things. This fantastic contingency apart, means must be found to emulate the churches in harnessing themselves to big business interests, in order that the great sums necessary for the effective propagation of humanist ideals can be acquired.

Within our ranks it should be possible to find the acumen to launch commercial enterprises, which after the fashion of the big stores and supermarkets, could ultimately yield great profits. Within our ranks it should be possible to devise the means of raising capital for such enterprises. There must be people among us who run

lucrative businesses and have substantial funds at their command. Our cause would deserve to fail if it could enlist none such to lay the foundations of freethought's powerhouse. There must be the devotional will to win the material means of success that characterises the religious institutions.

Otherwise, when the spectres of primitive belief should have disappeared, we shall be but a whisper in the corridors of time, and the Churches will still be playing their games, inimical to intellectual progress and mankind's true amenities.

CORRESPONDENCE

FRIDAY THE THIRTEENTH

IN THE FREETHINKER for October 8th it seems that T. Hill has let enthusiasm run away with him, $13 \times 28 = 365\frac{1}{2}$ is a house that will not go. It is unfortunate for Mr. Hill that 13 months of 28 days will not add up correctly. It may "do" for him, but not for a mathematician. Unfortunately the earth turns $365\frac{1}{2}$ times each time it circles the sun, which accounts for "twenty-nine days each leap year". There have been many attempts to reform the calendar, I think that 13 months has been mentioned before, but the odd quarter-day seems to fox most arrangements. It is evident that Mr. Hill's article was published without due consideration.

Thanks to Mr. Hill for making us think—but to little effect.

G. L. DICKINSON.

[An extra day every four years is, of course, a corollary of the 13-month calendar—ED].

THE MAN JESUS

Mr. Smith's letter in THE FREETHINKER (8/10/65) reminds me of the time when, as a youth, I used to express my unbelief to some young evangelists who, like Mr. Smith were horrified. Was I not aware that Mr. Gladstone believed in every word and comma in the Bible? Did I have the impudence to disagree with Mr. Gladstone? Had I a millionth part of the intelligence of Mr. Gladstone?—and so on.

I am very pleased to tell Mr. Smith that I did not care two hoots for Mr. Gladstone, as even then big names did not scare me, nor do they now. I do not believe in devils, angels and the miracles of Jesus, though he wants us to do so because Sir James Frazer and Mr. R. Smith do. I insist on evidence, and Sir James never gives us any. Nor does Mr. Smith.

In any case, instead of writing a very laudatory introduction to Dr. Couchoud's book, Sir James should have annihilated it with argument.

Perhaps Mr. R. Smith would like to try.

H. CUTNER

May I with the Editor's permission pen a few notes on a point raised by Mr. Micklewright in his recent debate with Dr. Soper. The discussion was conducted in a friendly genial atmosphere that reflects credit on both sides. With our reviewer I agree that Dr. Soper was on the defensive, but in his opening remark on the historic Jesus Mr. Micklewright made a statement that seemed very weak indeed. What do we know of the historic Jesus except a few fragments collected thirty or forty years after his decease? A life of Jesus cannot be written because the knowledge for such an undertaking does not exist.

True! But if we are asked to reject an historic Jesus on these grounds then likewise we can dismiss many other figures from history on the same basis. After all what do we know of Plato or Aristotle or Plutarch or many other figures of the past, except a few fragments left by friends or interested parties. Would Mr. Micklewright be prepared to do this? I cannot think so. And thirty or forty years is not such a long time to reflect back on past events as many can testify. When Sir Walter Scott wrote *Waverley! A Tale of The '45* he was able to collect information from people who were alive during that sad episode in Scottish history.

Boswell was supplied with Johnsoniana by people who remembered Johnson when he was an infant. And Charles Dickens was able to recall incidents and places from his childhood days.

If the early Christians were illiterate, and this is by no means proven, then the faculty of memory was probably better developed than today. We have no reason to suppose that in this respect they were our inferiors. This of course can be disputed but I believe it a point worth considering.

Many "lives" of Jesus have been attempted since the days of

Dean Farrar and Ernest Renan but none of them can be called biography in the strict and literal sense. They are but attempts at reconstruction as every biblical scholar, both in and outside the Church admits today. What we call the Gospels are the scattered anecdotes or sayings or "Logics" collected long after their author had passed from the human scene. True many gaps appear in the story but someone made an attempt at bringing to remembrance the almost forgotten details of this wandering "Messiah".

In Mark 6, a remark by a bystander is recorded, "Is not this the carpenter the Son of Mary, and brother of James, and Josiah, and Judas and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?"

Had Jesus been a myth it seems to me that this passage would not have appeared in the Gospel narrative. And further the incident of the overthrow of the money changers in the temple is too realistic and in keeping with the general character of Jesus to be a solar or any other variant of the myth story.

One important detail is generally overlooked in this controversy regarding the historical Jesus. During the bitter struggle between the Roman and the Jew culminating in the fall of Jerusalem, 70 AD, many thousands of Jews were killed and many of the moderates left Palestine never to return. Thus other possible avenues of information were lost almost from the start. One seldom hears arguments about Apollo or Jupiter or the fairy land of ancient mythology—but no figure has ever roused such oceans of literature, argument and defence and denial as the person, known or unknown, who has gone down in history as Jesus of Nazareth.

This is an indisputable fact, and to dismiss the Gospels as mere fiction, including the Acts also, is not a reasoned analysis but wishful thinking which so many of the Mythicists are fond of.

No Mr. Micklewright! your defence of the Secularist standpoint was good, but in regard to the historical Jesus question your "thirty or forty years" will not do.

E. MARKLEY.

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LIBRARY COLLECTION

IN 1493, Pope Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia), issued a papal bull by which the just discovered New World was divided between the Iberian empires, Spain and Portugal. For this was the decade that witnessed the epoch-making voyages of discovery to East and West that inaugurated modern, as distinct from medieval history. Only the previous year, the Genoese mariner, Christopher Columbus, flying the flag of Castille, had discovered (or should we now say rediscovered?) America when *en route* to the Far East. To the end of his days, Columbus persisted in the belief that all he had done was to reach Asia by the Western sea route. And in 1498, the Portuguese navigator, Vasco da Gama did actually succeed in reaching India by the Cape route. In 1493, accordingly, the famous (or infamous) Borgia (1492-1503), who had originally bribed the cardinals to elect him as pope, divided the entire present and prospective New World between Spain and Portugal. Incidentally, this decision of a Spanish pope (for the Borgias are stated to have been of mixed Spanish and Moorish origin) did not meet with universal approval among the rulers of Christian Europe. For one royal theologian, Francis I of France, went on record with the notable comment that he "would like to see the clause in the will of Adam which divided the New World in perpetuity between Spain and Portugal".

New Worlds for Old

Early in the last century, the English statesman, George Canning, made the historic remark that he "had called a New World into being in order to redress the balance of the Old". Whilst this remark itself was original, it will be seen that the fact behind it was far from being so. Throughout the 16th and subsequent centuries, the Roman Catholic Church had done just that in the Americas! For those devout and utterly ruthless sons of Holy Church, the Spanish Conquistadors, Cortez, Pizarro, etc, who conquered South and Central America throughout the 16th century, actually conquered a New World in both the geographical and spiritual sense. They ruthlessly tortured the unhappy Indian subjects of Montezuma (of Mexico) and the Incas of Peru, in order to save their immortal souls! For the Spanish Conquistadors looted America with such drastic thoroughness for "the greater glory of God" (as their Jesuit allies phrased it) and for the temporal profit of Holy Church, no less than for that of His Most Catholic Majesty the King of Spain.

Between 1500 and this present date, Rome has recovered a "New World" in compensation for the loss of so much of the Old World to the Protestant Reformation. In Paraguay, between 1600 and 1768, the Jesuits controlled what is still probably the most complete clerical theocracy ever ruled by men of European origin, whilst at least until recent years Rome was by far the greatest landowner in Latin America, just as she had been in medieval Europe before the Protestant Reformation. In actuality the Middle Ages have only ended in Latin America within living memory.

However, it would appear that nowadays the Middle Ages are no longer synonymous with the ages of faith. This at least is the very definite conclusion of an article that has just appeared in the (presumably Catholic) Dublin *Sunday Press* (10/10/65), entitled "Crisis in South America". Its place of origin is surely significant, for the Irish are the Catholic missionaries *par excellence*. (This self-same issue tells us that there are at present 1,400 Irish missionaries in Africa alone!) This crisis is of a spiritual, or more precisely, Catholic kind. For the article is written by a Roman Catholic missionary in Brazil who had formerly worked in Africa, Fr. John Jordan.

It is, it may be added, singularly frank and outspoken, and the clerical author is presumably an adherent of the Ecumenical movement within the Catholic Church, his numerous references to contemporary Protestant activities in South America are entirely without the ecclesiastical intolerance which would undoubtedly have marked references to the intrusion of Protestant "heretics" into the traditional domain of the "One True Church" in those regions only a few years ago.

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The Reformation reaches South America

For it becomes abundantly clear from the numerous facts and figures that he quotes, that as in Europe during the 16th century, the Protestant Reformation has arrived in Latin America during the second half of this 20th century. Moreover, to judge from his own frank admissions, the Church of Rome in this year of grace is as ineffective, if not as corrupt, as it was when the Protestant Reformers first raised the standard of revolt in the days of the Borgias. Today, to add insult to injury—according to this Catholic missionary author—Protestant missions (he does not specify which precise denominations) are currently trespassing with conspicuous, even spectacular success upon the very American terrain which in 1493 Alexander bestowed "in perpetuity" upon the Iberian Catholic empires of Spain and Portugal. Trespassing on the Borgias' terrain!

A Spiritual Vacuum

It would appear self-evident from this outspokenly frank admission, that Fr. John Jordan, is that perhaps *rara avis*, a completely honest cleric (or else a crypto-Protestant!). For he does not mince matters at all. He refers to the present crisis of the Catholic Church in Latin America as "a spiritual tragedy, to my mind the greatest of all", and adds that the current position of Rome in South America can only be described as "desperate". Latin America, he says, "has one third of the baptised members of the Catholic Church—about one hundred and sixty million in all, in material and spiritual need". Then, after discussing a recent Protestant report on South America shown to him by a Protestant missionary friend, he adds: "The conclusions of the report were that the Catholic Church had had the South American for four centuries, and at the end of that vast period of time had left him exactly where it had found him, in the ditch without pastors for his soul, without schools for his mind, without

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Drift From Rome

By F. A. RIDLEY

hospitals for his body and without skill for his hands”.

In brief, Rome had found a vast spiritual vacuum in South America and had maintained one there ever since; surely a succinct outline of history from a Roman priest who is an eye-witness of what he describes.

Nature, however, abhors a vacuum, and so apparently, do Protestant missionaries. For, according to the Catholic man on the spot—who is surely in a position to know—the Protestant Church “is organised for missionary work in a way in which Rome today is not”, and the Protestant Churches are at present concentrating their activities upon South America in an all-out missionary drive.

According to Fr. Jordan, this drive is now meeting with spectacular success, for he states that Protestantism has ten million adherents in a part of the world where fifteen or twenty years ago, it had practically none. In a few years time, the “Reformation” in South America will be as successful numerically as it was in Europe four centuries ago. In Fr. Jordan’s own spiritual territory Brazil, by far the largest South American country, Protestantism “claims a conversion rate from Catholicism of 1,000 a day. My estimate of the situation—and I am a missionary in Brazil—is that 25 years from now, it will have 50 per cent of that mighty land if the Catholic Church outside Brazil does not evolve a new and dynamic missionary policy”. Surely this surprisingly frank confession that one third of the baptised members of the Catholic Church are

on the way out, is simultaneously a shot in the arm for the Protestant Churches here, which habitually complain of falling congregations.

The facts and figures quoted above are of extreme interest and importance, not only because South America is nowadays one of the major areas for economic and cultural evolution, but more specifically in connection with the present Vatican Council and its advertised plans for ecumenical Christian reunion. For here in the remarkably frank disclosures (which might surely have been included in the recent book, *Objections to Roman Catholicism*) by a working Catholic missionary who is obviously both honest and intelligent, we have perhaps the clearest evidence extant why the Vatican is at present so concerned with the present and future of Rome. The fact of course is that under its imposing facade of world unity and power, the Roman Catholic Church is now faced with imminent prospects of rapid decline and of ultimate disintegration. For it is probably not only in South America that harassed missionaries are besieging the Vatican with lugubrious complaints and with Cassandra-like predictions of coming doom. The Reformation did not end in Europe nor, despite its apparent current growth in a specially backward area like Latin America, do we think it will end with Protestantism either. It is now surely up to Freethinkers to cash in on this so promising situation in a major centre of Roman world power.

Not A Holy Book—Just A Book

By F. BARON

I HAVE RECENTLY participated in a discussion with several theologians in the paper, *News and Comments*, published by the Philosophical Society of Great Britain. The theologians have, I pointed out, themselves done away with the Bible. They admit that the devil is non-existent, that the Old Testament is Jewish history, and that Christ, as a risen God, is no more than one of the ancient myths of the priests of Egypt and Greece. The Bishop of Woolwich offers a God in whom rests the philosophers’ idea of The Absolute, crossed with the attributes of the old Jehovah. But the reverend writer goes even further. He offers us a God who is full of sin and not responsible for His actions. We are told that if God was all goodness then goodness would be no credit to Him. This sounds very like something from *Alice in Wonderland*, or perhaps the reverend gentleman has read Madame Blavatsky and become a Theosophist, and instead of believing in the devil, now believes in ghosties and ghoulies, and things that “go boop” in the night. I also fear, according to the Rev. F., “that Christianity has more in common with other faiths than has ever been admitted”. Why not instead say that the theologians are so bankrupt of ideas that they are stretching out in desperation to other faiths to fill their churches. Surely, in order to fill these churches, the Rev. F. does not wish to take over the trinity of the Ancient Egyptians, Isis, Osiris, and Horus. Perhaps he hopes to see, now that the decay of Christianity has set in, a return to the worship of the old gods the philosophers of Greece were busy denouncing two thousand years ago. So long as the churches fill is this the one and only idea in the minds of the theologians? If so they are spiritually destitute. Perhaps we might also ask what has happened now to the Christian doctrine of free will. Has this idea also been jettisoned?

It is also asserted that Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were philosophers who upheld the gods of the state. But is this so? Was not Socrates accused by the Athenians of not worshipping the gods the city worshipped, but of introducing divinities of his own, by which ideas he was corrupting the youth of Athens, and incidentally depriving the priesthood of a lucrative livelihood? Protagoras is another Greek philosopher, mention of whom was not made, who was forced to flee from Athens and his books burnt, because he did not worship the gods of the state, but declared that life was too short to decide whether gods existed or not, and man’s knowledge was too limited for him to find out. As for Plato and Aristotle, it was quite in keeping with their method of “double think”, to agree that the masses be kept in ignorance whilst their superiors discussed more transcendent gods than stone statues.

Is this view still upheld by the Church? If so, the Church is antiquated, and the accusation of the Humanists that organised religion is against both progress and truth, is more than verified. The Church can no longer hold back the truth from the people. It has too often been pointed out to those with eyes to see and ears to hear that the theologians have no knowledge of God. We might point out that the knowledge of the Humanist too is limited, unless Nature is fundamentally spiritual, which the Humanist denies, but too great a debt is owed to the overthrowers of superstitions to demand proof either way of this.

Theologians call themselves “Men of God”. As men of God let them speak the truth from their pulpits. Let them confess to their congregations that the Bible is Jewish history and ancient myth, and start anew to seek God, or a knowledge of God — if such knowledge exists.

(Concluded on page 348)

The Teaching of Sex in Schools

By E. G. MACFARLANE

AS A TEACHER of over thirty years' experience in junior secondary education I have seen, or heard, how, time and again, a legitimate youthful interest in sex knowledge is ignored or turned aside by teachers who have absorbed the Christian taboos about sex. And I have come to the definite conclusion that the difficulties which self-proclaimed Christian teachers say they have in even approaching the idea of teaching about sex, stem from the doctrines of the Christian faith more than from anything else.

May I give just one example, from a published source, of the way a fairly typical Christian will approach the subject of teaching sex in schools. For the first time, to my knowledge, the *Scottish Educational Journal* (the official organ of the Educational Institute of Scotland, which is our largest trade union organisation for teachers) carried a leading article urging the teaching of sex in schools. This appeared under the title "Facts of Life" in the issue of August 6th, 1965.

At this point I would like the reader to lay this article down and try to imagine for himself what the first sentence might be on such a subject from an orthodox Christian writer. As an experiment do not read any farther than the end of this sentence and use a few moments to speculate how you think it might be done.

The article opens with these words: "It used to be believed that unchastity was both self-degrading and antisocial, in fact a sin. In the moral climate of today these beliefs no longer command the unquestioning acceptance they once did but among readers of this *Journal* at least we are old-fashioned enough to believe there is no need to argue the point."

I wonder how many of my Humanist readers estimated that sin would be brought into the first sentence? There are no prizes of course. It was too easy a prediction to make! Sin and old-fashionedness are what we have grown to expect from the orthodox spokesmen of Christian education.

I might have added presumption as well, because the Editor of the *Journal* must know quite well that there is a growing number of teachers in Scotland who are readers of his paper but who no longer take this old-fashioned view. I am one of these, and I know a number of others who are of the same frame of mind. There are probably many more who are lying doggo for economic reasons connected with hopes of promotion which they realise is now very largely in the hands of unelected members of Education Committees, i.e. ministers of religion and other representatives of the Churches. (How I wish such people who hide their Humanist opinions would be honest and outspoken instead of being so tacitly hypocritical towards these guardians of Christian education in Britain! Can they not see that they are practising a form of dishonesty which is bringing the whole teaching profession into disrepute and probably infecting the whole of the rising generation with tendencies to deceit and such forms of dissimulation and dishonesty?)

After quoting figures from a recent report published about "immorality" in England the writer of the leader continues, "The really shocking thing about the English survey is the extent of the ignorance on sexual matters and the lack of comprehension it reveals among young people. This is primarily the fault of the parents, but if they shirk,

or are unequal to, their responsibility for moral instruction, then it devolves by default on the schools or some other agency. This indeed is an educational need which has been strangely neglected. We talk of 'educating the whole child' and 'learning for living' but in regard to some of the most acute of all human problems, on their ability to cope with which the happiness of every boy and girl, as well as the well-being of society as a whole largely depends, we do very little."

This "neglect" is not "strange" to most Humanists. It is quite clear to most of us that this "neglect" of sex education in a "Christian" society stems directly from the highly artificial and improbable accounts of the hero of Christian teaching. When a man (God?) starts his life without there having been sexual contact between his mother and a man; when he (He?) lives without marrying a woman or (apparently!) having sexual intercourse with any woman or fathering any children; it is not surprising to a logical Humanist that the movement which bears his (His?) name should have a deeply ingrained aversion to sex activity of any kind. I, at least, can see some logical connection between these things, and I think it is perfectly clear that the sexlessness of Christ is the rootstock of all the ideas about the glory of "celibacy", which has been proclaimed for hundreds of years by the Roman Catholic and some other Churches, as well as of the unhealthy attitude to sex which is implicit in all the writings of orthodox Christian educationists in Britain and elsewhere today.

This particular article I have quoted from also says that, "In recent years there have been attempts to fill this gap in our education service and more and more schools are now giving some attention to health and sex education. The difficulty is that such teaching does not have a recognised place in the school curriculum: the teacher training system does not produce teachers to cope with this difficult subject, nor is there an agreed syllabus to guide those who are nevertheless willing to attempt to give children instruction and moral guidance on sex on their own initiative or their head teacher's. It has all to be done more or less unofficially and for the teacher who tries in these circumstances to instruct children in sex matters, the risk of being misunderstood by conventionally-minded or prudish parents could be a serious one."

This particular paragraph (except perhaps for the emphasis on difficulty) could have been taken straight from some Humanist pamphlet on sex education in schools and may be taken as a tribute to the effect that Humanist propaganda is having on people who apparently cannot see how what they are now saying conflicts with Christian ideology.

The article concludes: "If the education service is to deal with the problem and to deal with it effectively, the first essential is to determine officially what is to be taught at a given stage and how, and by whom. Possibly the new consultative committee on the curriculum which the Scottish Education Department is preparing to set up in the autumn would be an appropriate body to undertake this enquiry. Certainly the sooner some official body gets down to really hard thinking on this subject the better."

Thinking I would perhaps be able to help these people with their "hard thinking" I wrote to the Editor of the
(Concluded on page 348)

This Believing World

WITHOUT discussing the Rhodesian problem here, we should like to draw attention to one fact which appears to have been overlooked. A few days before Mr. Ian Smith landed in England, the Pope went to America with his plea for "no more war" and "peace by negotiation", for which he was acclaimed all over the world. Yet a few days later, the United Nations were roundly telling Mr. Smith to do as he was told by them, and the UN gave a 98 per cent vote for military action to be taken immediately if he didn't. The Pope was completely ignored. We wonder why?

★

SO, AFTER insisting that the Jews collectively—that is, for over 1,900 years—were responsible for the death of Jesus, the Vatican Council has now ruled "that the Jews cannot be held collectively responsible for Christ's death". The Council has declared by 2,000 votes to 200 that "Responsibility for the death of Jesus must not be attributed indiscriminately to all Jews either of Christ's time or ours. Jews are no more to be considered reprov'd by God or accursed" (*Daily Mail*, 16/10/65). This will be a blow for the societies for converting Jews to Christianity. Their greatest card was to blame *all* Jews of all time for putting their own Messiah to death. What work is there to do now?

★

THE Rev. J. Baggs of High Wycombe appears to be very depressed. He is quoted by the *Daily Express*, (14/10/65) as describing God's masterpiece "this Earth of ours" as "a nasty, rough, brutal, world we live in. A jungle, red in tooth and claw". So, he added "millions retire into the world of fiction and fancy and make believe". Still, it was created by God—so who is to blame if a mess was made of it?

★

IN SPITE of being on the Primate's staff, the chaplain to Dr. Ramsey has, with his wife, joined the Roman Church. Canon Brigstocke was an examiner, whose job it was "to test men newly admitted to Holy Orders". Whether it was this experience which caused the couple to give up the Church of England in despair, we cannot say, but it does seem strange that the influence of Dr. Ramsey himself to keep them on the straight and narrow path of Anglicanism was as naught. Anyway, it is a prize conversion for Rome.

★

THERE is nothing more stimulating than to see "a clash" over Church freedom, especially if it is a Roman Catholic one. As an example of what Spain has to endure from its priests, take the pompous nonsense of Cardinal Beniamino de Arriva y Castro—"Only the Catholic Church has the right to preach the Gospel". What he would do to the Mormons or the Christadelphians if he had the chance we shudder to think about!

★

THE Vatican's proposed declaration, that "everyone has the right to freedom of worship" was of course bitterly attacked by several powerful cardinals, and no doubt would have been attacked by the lot had we been living in 1565 and not 1965. But those happy days when Rome ruled the roost have gone for ever. Its own days are probably numbered now. The "Space Age" in which we are living has demolished the theology of the Vatican, and even were Catholics given the right to think for themselves now in religious matters, the end is inevitable, even if Spanish cardinals don't realise it.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury described William Booth as "one of the greatest Christians of all time" at a thanksgiving service in Canterbury Cathedral on October 17th, to mark the centenary year of the Salvation Army. On the same day, Dr. Ramsey was criticised by the Rural Dean of Greenwich the Rev. Nicolas Stacey, for not giving a lead on the moral issues of the Rhodesian crisis. Preaching at his installation in St. Alfrege's Church, Greenwich, the new Dean called on the Archbishop to lead a multi-racial team of bishops and church leaders to Rhodesia on a peace mission. What a hope he has! It's much easier to praise a "blood and fire" campaign of a hundred years ago.

NOT A HOLY BOOK—JUST A BOOK

(Concluded from page 346)

Let them turn their faces against cruelty, whether to man or animal, and not gloat at egg factories and milk machines, or the herding of cattle into pens in which their lives are spent, until their brief time on earth is ended in the slaughterhouse. Until the theologians turn their faces against such horrors, they are not Men of God, but Men of the good Old-Fashioned Devil. A book just recently published, *All Heaven in a Rage*, points out, that animals "have no souls". It is not the animal who is without soul, but those who thought up this hideous teaching, and those who still teach it. It is they who are without soul.

If the Rev. F. still considers me "antiquated", better to be so than to believe in myths, or that "animals have no souls". And if man has no soul either, then man is no different in this respect from the rest of the animal world, save that the so-called lower forms of life have not brought suffering into the world by means of priesthoods given over to the telling of myths which produce cruelty instead of goodness in mankind. Better far to follow the philosopher in his pursuit of goodness, truth and beauty; of the poet and the artist in their interpretation of the universe, which is full of the fruits of heaven if people only look for them.

THE TEACHING OF SEX IN SCHOOLS

(Concluded from page 347)

Journal and offered to contribute an article entitled "How to Broach the Subject of Sex in the Classroom", but my offer was refused.

I have paid particular attention to the letters, etc., in the *Journal* since the leader under consideration appeared, and nobody appears to be interested in the subject of getting down to teaching sex knowledge to the younger generation. It seems a pity that an enlightened Editor of this kind does not get any support for his leaders! Of course other individuals like myself with "minority" views may have written to him and he did not think that their views were important enough to be published.

Meantime the need continues to exist for some action on the subject but I cannot really see anything concrete emerging at the official level until the Christian directors of education are replaced by people with overtly Humanist views. After all one cannot expect a man who is trying to dig a grave, and whose whole ideology has been connected with preparing for death, suddenly to turn round and build a decent house for the living!

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Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, October 31st, 6.30 p.m.: Debate: Rev. BILL MATTHEWS and F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT, "The Influence of Christianity has been Restrictive rather than Enlightening".

Richmond and Twickenham Humanist Group, (Room 4, Community Centre, Sheen Road), Thursday, November 4th, 8 p.m.: S. D. KUEBART, "Pope Pius XII and the Nazis".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, October 31st, 11 a.m.: Dr. JOHN LEWIS, "Religion, Curse or Blessing?".

Tuesday, November 2nd, 7.30 p.m.: LOIS HIEGER, "Conflicting Claims of the Individual and the Group".

Surbiton and Kingston Branches NSS (The White Hart, Kingston Bridge, Hampton Wick), Friday, October 29th, 8 p.m.: J. A. MILLAR, "The Economic Power of the Vatican".

Worthing Humanist Group (Morelands Hotel, The Pier), Sunday, October 31st, 5.30 p.m.: Dr. A. SLOMAN, "Rationality in Morals".

Notes and News

THE Ecumenical Council's declaration on the Jews received its final approval on October 15th, and, after the formal ratification of Pope Paul VI, will become part of the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. Jews will no doubt be gratified to learn that the Church has decided, some 1,900-odd years after the supposed event, that "responsibility for the death of Christ is not to be attributed indiscriminately to all Jews then living, nor to the Jews of today"; and they are "not to be regarded as rejected or accursed by God". Alas, the *Observer* reported (17/10/65) that the declaration had received a "mixed world reaction".

★

IN ROME, the international Jewish organisation, B'nai B'rith, hailed the declaration as an act of historical justice which would help to eliminate prejudice and discrimination. But the American Jewish leader, Dr. Joachim Prinz, while welcoming it as a manifestation of goodwill, was disappointed that it was not "as clear and forthright as it might have been expected". In Cairo, a spokesman for the Egyptian Roman Catholic Patriarchate said that it would "provide Jews with a moral weapon which they would exploit for their own ends against Arab countries". And in Syria, Patriarch Theodosius, head of the Greek Orthodox Church for Antioch and the Near East, rejected the declaration. All believers in the Jewish faith should be held responsible for Christ's death, he declared.

WHILE there was a shortage of priests, all monks and friars with the exception of enclosed contemplatives, should be ready to take up pastoral work, Cardinal Heenan told the Vatican Council, in what the *Sunday Times* (17/10/65) called one of the most straight-from-the-shoulder speeches yet heard. "It is surely better to preach the Gospel to the people of God", he said, "than to stay at home to write articles about the people of God", a remark for which he was loudly applauded. Religious orders quoted their constitutions to show why they couldn't undertake pastoral work but, the Cardinal added scathingly, "they are allowed to teach the humanities to boys of good family—a task the laity could do equally well—or to preach retreats for nuns". But the Holy Rule forbade them to "go out and give religious instruction to the ignorant and take the Bread of Life to the poor".

★

CARDINAL HEENAN also made a plea for a more realistic understanding of the problem of "lapsed" priests—of which there are many more than the Roman Catholic Church normally acknowledges. "Among priests everywhere there is a heartwarming tradition of compassion for the fallen brethren", Dr. Heenan said. But this was not enough: The priest had a duty to try to forestall the failure of a weak or wayward colleague. "When a wretched man has made a shipwreck of his priestly life, it is not at all uncommon for his closest associates to express no surprise", the Cardinal continued. "Surely it is the duty of a priest to be wise before, not after, the event, and to warn the bishop or vicar-general so that the unfortunate priests may be moved from temptation before it is too late". This, we suggest, is naive in the extreme: thinking like a child and regarding men as children. One doesn't remove doubts by moving the priest who has them. Nor is it a satisfactory remedy if sex be the "temptation".

★

TALKING of sex, reminds us of an article by Norman Mackenzie on Baden-Powell (*New Statesman*, 15/10/65). For B-P had his own Puritanical formulae for suppressing the sex-urge. Wash the "racial-organ" daily in cold water, he enjoined, as a preventive for "the natural overflow" that may occur in dreams, and as a general means of "fighting down the desires that come upon you in the course of Nature". Young fellows who get "nervy and unsettled" should take things calmly(!) and "try to get over it as they would the measles or any other youthful complaint". B-P also frightened the boys with pages (in *Rovering to Success*) on venereal disease, reminded them of their mothers and exhorted them to get out in the fresh air. But when their time came to marry and perform "bodily for the service of God in carrying on the race on the best of lines", Girl Guides would make wives who "can be better pals because they have got the same keenness on camping". After that, we need some fresh air.

★

"LOCAL government is too often a closed book", writes Martin Ennals, General Secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties, in his preface to the Council's latest publication, *Local Government and Civil Liberty*, by Albert Chapman (2s. 6d.). Yet local government affects us all, and to be effective it needs "active and informed citizens" and "communication between the electorate and its representative". Who is entitled to vote? When are elections held? Who may stand for them? How much power does a local authority have; how may its decisions be challenged? These are the kinds of questions dealt with by Mr. Chapman, who is Lecturer in Local Government Law at the Lanchester College of Technology, Coventry. We recommend his 32-page booklet.

When Greek Meets Priest

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

FATHER BERNARD was well endowed and could afford to give himself rewarding holidays abroad and indulge his hobby of archaeology. The good father had invited poor old Father Joseph to come and spend his last days in a comfortable presbytery; but often Father Joseph wondered if Father Bernard did not regret his generosity and wish the old man out of the house. Of course Father Bernard had to save his face and pretend that an act of charity was not too severe a penance, but Father Joseph would have taken many a hint if he had anywhere else to go apart from the grim diocesan home for the superannuated.

Well, one night when Father Joseph was alone in Father Bernard's charming sitting room, he heard the telephone ring. A voice that was strangely familiar asked for Father Bernard. Before Father Joseph could say that Father Bernard was in Greece, the voice cried, "Bernard, come at once, for the love of Heaven!" The voice evidently thought that Father Joseph was Father Bernard. There was a house he wanted Father Bernard to go to. He described it pretty well. It seemed to be one of those fake Gothic lodges, which delight the John Betjemanites; and it stood in a meadow which had not yet been seized by the jerry builders. The voice said the front door was open. Then the voice broke, and Father Joseph could hear gasping.

"For the love of Heaven," the voice cried, "don't forget what to do. Go through the hall with the antlers on the walls. At the end of the hall, under the staircase, is the door to the kitchen. In the kitchen is the trap-door to the cellar. It has fallen. The catch is on the outside. Unless you come to help me, I can't get out. And then . . ."

Father Joseph pulled himself together and said, "Who the devil are you?"

The voice laughed, and the old priest didn't like the sound of that laugh. Then he heard the voice say, "This is Father Joseph speaking."

In a flash, the old priest knew why the voice had sounded familiar. It was his own voice, and he was terrified. But he argued with himself that it must be a damnable practical joke, a really elaborate practical joke in which somebody had gone to the trouble of learning to imitate his voice. It still upset him frightfully.

Five days later, Father Bernard came back. He looked as fit as a crozier, and he said he was shocked to find Father Joseph looking so pale. He told the old man that he really must get out into the Autumn sunshine. He said he knew a very pleasant ramble and would draw a map. Moreover, he had a crony, another antiquary to whom he sometimes sent in his charity some of his findings at a dig, an eccentric who lived along the route. The crony would be delighted to give Father Joseph a cup of tea.

Father Joseph sensed that Father Bernard wanted to get him out of the house while he worked up his notes on his recent trip; but the old man felt that he had to accept the presence of the other's concern. So he found himself on the first of what Father Bernard promised would be many amiable rambles following the course of a little known river on the outskirts of London. Father Joseph was not particularly impressed with the Betjemanesque landscape of desolate meadows dotted with occasional factories, and the whole thing seemed to be taking so much longer than he'd expected.

Then the river twisted, and all of a sudden the old priest found the path blocked by a small Gothic villa. In the low

rays of the sun it looked humoresquely sinister. This must, he felt, be the eccentric home of Father Bernard's crony. Then Father Joseph remembered the telephone call.

So the joker had been a friend of Father Bernard. How cruel! And what should Father Joseph do about it? Should he hurry on and leave well alone, or should he go in and take a welcome cup of tea and give his host a piece of his mind?

He found that he had his fingers crooked round the bell before he realised that the front door was ajar. Then some demon — the psychoanalysts call it the automatic reflex — prompted him to push the door open. Inside, the hall was hung with antlers. Well . . . a good priest was protected by God and should exorcise a nightmare. He called out, "Is anyone there?"

On the right of the hall he saw an open door leading to an empty room, but a fire was burning in the hearth. The occupier, the priest thought grimly, must be cold-blooded to need a fire on such a pleasant day. Then he saw the door under the staircase; and almost against his will, he was drawn to it. With a rising sense of distress, he saw that the kitchen, too, was empty; yet a maid's cap lay on the floor and it had obviously been dropped in haste.

What had happened in this house? A fire smouldering, a starched cap on the kitchen floor, and nobody about? Then Father Joseph noticed the trap-door. Muttering a prayer and clenching his fists, he bent over the closed aperture and shouted, "Anyone there, anyone there?"

He thought he heard a faint cry from below. Well, supposing there was somebody in trouble in the cellar? Supposing he'd been appointed by some saint to help? Messages from the spirit world often did get muddled, just as if they were not too bright up there. But that was nearly blasphemy. Maybe it was simply Father Joseph himself who had misinterpreted some warning.

The old priest jerked at the trap-door and peered into the vault below. An electric light was burning down there; and now he could be almost certain that someone was calling him, very faintly. Automatically, thinking that it was a priest's obligation, he put one foot on the tread of the stone stairs; and then, automatically, his other foot sought the second tread.

Now he could see the cellar. It was a meticulously arranged private museum and store room. Well, of course, there would not be much spare room in the little lodge. The owner would have to improvise. He had even arranged a writing desk and a telephone. He could ring up the authorities from his study to check points without going up the stairs. A wreath of smoke rose from an ashtray.

Father Joseph's feet went on, down four more steps; and he could see a packing case with a label on it, *Athens*. Fragments of classical statues were neatly disposed near it. Was this something that Father Bernard had sent on to his crony from Greece?

The old priest was almost at the bottom of the steps, but still he could not see the curator of the private museum and workroom. But there was a statue dumped aimlessly, a full-length figure which had not yet found its niche. What, in God's name, was it doing in modern dress in the lair of an antiquarian? It was as if a man had been photographically reproduced in stone, dressed in clothes, given a wig and eyelashes. It was ghastly, and . . . there

was a look of unutterable horror in the eyes.

Father Joseph glanced in the direction in which the horrible stone eyes were staring. The stone man was apparently transfixed by what appeared to be the largest of the classical statue fragments, partly covered with a voluminous handkerchief. The priest could see through the handkerchief the peak of a nose and the shape of some features; and he was weirdly reminded of pictures he had seen of the Medusa's head. Medusa — the woman who turned men to stone!

But that was pagan superstition, and his God was stronger than any pagan myth? Yet his God had let him be led into this unbearable situation. Was Medusa stronger than his God? It could only be if . . . there was no Christian God. Oh yes, he'd heard theologians say that the old gods had power because they had accumulated the faith which men had directed at them. They were, in fact, merely focus points for human energies. So . . . in an age of jolly television parsons there was less strength behind the idea of a Christian God than behind that of Medusa who represented a legend deeply rooted in the psyche?

Thoughts darted through Father Joseph's consciousness . . . things that the mind could do . . . telepathy, hypnosis, faith-cures . . . There was no need to invent spirits!

Oh God, curling snakes of hair peeped under the handkerchief; and as the priest watched he thought he saw the snakes move and the cloth begin to billow as if the lips were breathing behind it. He could have sworn that the head gave a little shake, as if it were trying to rid itself of the handkerchief which perhaps the victim had hurled towards the transfixing head in some last paroxysm. Father Joseph, who had prayed to statues of the Virgin Mary, now believed that if the handkerchief fell, if he met the Medusa's eye, he too would be turned to stone.

Behind him the trap-door fell, and . . . the catch was on the outside. What a damnable arrangement; but maybe the curator wanted to lock up his treasures when he left them for the night. Lock up the things which Father Bernard had sent him . . .

Father Bernard! Was he so exacerbated by the old priest's company that he had been driven to extremes? Had he become so ruthless that he was willing to sacrifice his crony in a plot to get rid of Father Joseph?

There was that telephone on the desk. But Father Joseph found . . . that his own voice answered him. He was making the call just as he had received it a week ago. His own voice asked him what the devil he meant by this farce.

The sweat flowed in rivers over the geography of his poor body. He could no longer believe in saintly intervention. This was some kink in the fourth dimension.

He tried to prevent his neck muscles from turning or from looking up at . . . the dreadful battery of mental power; but . . . but they seemed to be developing a will of their own.

Oh God, he thought, it is not only my mind which is sick but my soul . . . But he knew that he had no soul . . . He knew only that the rich priest . . . that Father Bernard had a heart of stone.

SILENT SPRING

Rachel Carson's warning against the "seemingly endless stream of synthetic insecticides"

"Essential reading for anybody who has not yet encountered it"—Colin McCall in THE FREETHINKER.

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The United States Visit of Pope Paul VI

WHAT a show! Certain of America's leading broadcasting networks went "all out" to make the longest television and radio coverage in history—more than thirteen hours—of a single event. I refer, of course, to Pope Paul VI's one-day visit on October 4th, 1965, to the United States.

That was a papal binge of pomp and pageantry which has left most of Americans reeling, non-Catholics as well as Catholics. And it must be said for the world's most prominent and powerful witchdoctor, Pope Paul VI, that he, with the indispensable and able support of numerous followers, lay and clerical, put on an act which has given the Roman Catholic Church, at least in America, a new and "better" public image. This holds true even though the Pope said nothing for the betterment of international relations which had not already been said long before by non-Roman Catholics, including atheists. They who jump onto the bandwagon frequently steal the show and get the credit.

I strongly suspect, however, that the change of face which the Church of Rome has undergone during the last year or so does not really indicate a change of heart. It is true that even Cardinal Spellman, at the Vatican Council in September, joined with the many prelates who spoke for and voted to uphold the natural right of the individual to freedom of conscience in matters of religious belief, even to the extent of including atheism. But I do not forget that Spellman placed his *imprimatur* on a book entitled *Catholic Principles of Politics*, a work which is "designed" as its preface states, "not only for the general reader but also as a college text", and which has been published by the Macmillan Company since 1940. That book, which is based on, and which has as one of its chapters, the text of Pope Leo XIII's intolerant encyclical *Immortale Dei* of 1885, unequivocally denies the individual's natural right of freedom of conscience.

Moreover, that work asserts, albeit somewhat guardedly, that where Roman Catholics are a substantial majority in a country, the civil government of that country ought to give preferential status to the Roman Catholic Church and its clergy even to the extent of prohibiting the propagation of doctrine and teachings by other religious sects or by secularists which are not in harmony with those of the Church of Rome.

One may justifiably feel certain that the impression which Pope Paul's October 4th *tour de force* in New York City has made upon many non-Roman Catholics who are unacquainted with the history of the Roman Catholic Church will serve to induce the Congress of the United States to broaden and deepen the breach, already made under President Johnson's "leadership" of the nation, in this country's constitutional wall of complete and permanent separation of religion and government.

ROBERT H. SCOTT, (USA)

CORRESPONDENCE

THE WOMANIST

In her article "Secularism and Glamour" Kit Mouat says that she would prefer being labelled a "Hellenist", but not being a scholar, cannot claim it. I just wonder if she can tell me what a "Hellenist" is. She also says that she has an attraction to Epicurean as a label, but this sounds too masculine for her. This is, of course, her anti-male complex showing itself again, as it usually does in quite a few of her articles. I thoroughly advise her to go and see the film *How to Murder your Wife*, as she will hear what the man has to say about it all.

I suggest the best label for Kit Mouat would be "Womanist" not a "Humanist", although in some ways they mean the same thing, as I don't suppose the editor of the *Humanist* would allow anything anti-female in his journal. However, now that the editor of THE FREETHINKER has published my article dealing with Epicu-

reanism, Kit Mouat will perhaps never mention the word Epicurean again, as in it I have laid bare the essence of Epicureanism. What I should like to know is the essence of Mouatism. Where are all the women philosophers?

R. SMITH.

CHRISTMAS

A regular reader of THE FREETHINKER, I was interested in the letter by Mr. R. G. Caldwell published in the October 1st issue. I also do not share his abhorrence of the word "Christmas" (as the editor commented) purely because many of us use the word from force of habit without thinking about its analysis. However in the Scandinavian countries, (which are Christian), the word for Christmas is Jul, which is the name of the pre-Christian pagan ceremony. Therefore any people not wishing to speak of Christmas can always refer to it as "Yuletide" although this word does not enjoy the usage of the word "Christmas". Is there any possibility of free-thinking greetings cards being published with the word "Yuletide" being substituted for the word "Christmas"?

A. BLOOD.

I am interested in Mr. Caldwell's letter, re Christmas cards, and think that my own method may be of some help to him.

I do not buy cards at all for adults but find I can get calendars a bit bigger than a post-card from the local shop of a very big and world-wide chain of stores. I can write my greetings on the back of these, choosing my own words, and I always include wishes for the New Year.

A Christmas superstition renders it "unlucky" to leave up decorations, etc., after January 6th (another Christian feast) and the Christmas cards perish on or before this date, being thrown away or perhaps burnt. But frequently, on visiting a friend during the following summer, I find my calendar hanging up on the wall and thus still displaying its utility.

A. R. WISE.

WHY MAKE THE WORLD A HUMAN ANTHILL?

"We want to stand upon our own feet and look fair and square at the world, its good facts, its bad facts, its beauties, and its ugliness; see the world as it is, and not be afraid of it. We want to conquer the world by intelligence and not be slavishly subdued by the terror that comes from it.

"The whole conception of God is a conception derived from the ancient Oriental despotisms. It is a conception quite unworthy of free men. When you hear people in church debasing themselves and saying that they are miserable sinners, and all the rest of it, it seems contemptible and not worthy of self-respecting human beings.

"We ought to stand up, and look the world frankly in the face. We ought to make the best we can of the world, and if it is not as good as we wish, after all it will still be better than what others have made of it in all these ages.

"A good world needs knowledge, kindness, and courage; it does not need a regretful hankering after the past, or a fettering of the free intelligence by the words uttered long ago by ignorant men.

"It needs a fearless outlook and a free intelligence. It needs hope (and work) for the future, not looking back all the time towards a past that is dead, which we trust will be far surpassed by the future that our intelligence can create".

The above words are those of England's Bertrand Russell. I would add that the most crying need of the world today, is not Billy Graham's, Fulton Sheen's, or anyone else's Christianity, but more birth-control knowledge. This is still opposed by the one Church which stands to gain the most by such opposition, at the expense of all others. A change in doctrine would indicate whether this Church is more humane than political, but such a change is needed now, if we are to avoid making this world a human anthill. Most of the problems of the world today are people problems.

WILLARD E. EDWARDS, (Honolulu).

FRIDAY THE THIRTEENTH

Mr. Hill's article (8/10/65) on superstitions was very interesting. I have questioned many people on their apprehension of Friday the 13th, and have often been told that "it's very rare".

We always get one such 13th a year, sometimes two, and even (but never more than) three. Days repeat themselves, as to month, date, and last two year figures, every four hundred years. This cycle is known as the Gregorian cycle, (after we know who!).

There are 4,800 months in this cycle, each of which has a "thirteenth". More of these Fridays than any other day, which was the basis of a mathematician's (B. H. Brown's) assertion that "the thirteenth of a month is more likely to be a Friday than to be any other day of the week".

Incidentally, I once asked a superstitious dunderhead whether Friday the 13th was rarer than Thursday the 5th, and was solemnly assured that it was!

P. A. WEBB.

OBITUARY

Mr. Fred Brown who died recently after a long illness was a life-long freethinker and reader of this paper. He was aged 76.

A secular committal ceremony was conducted by the General Secretary of the National Secular Society at Reading Crematorium on October 6th. We extend our sympathy to his relatives.

Books of Interest

- Ten Non-Commandments *Ronald Fletcher* 2s. 6d. postage 5d.
 The Thinkers Handbook *Hector Hawton* 5s. postage 8d.
 The Humanist Revolution *Hector Hawton* 10s. 6d. postage 8d.
 Pioneers of Social Change *Royston Pike* 15s. postage 10d.
 The Origins of Religion *Lord Raglan* 2s. 6d. postage 6d.
 Man and His Gods *Homer Smith* 13s. 6d. postage 10d.
 Evolution of The Idea of God *Grant Allen* 3s. 6d. postage 6d.
 The Age of Reason *Thomas Paine* 3s. 6d. postage 5d.
 The Rights of Man *Thomas Paine* 9s. 6d. postage 1s.
 Thomas Paine *Chapman Cohen* 1s. postage 3d.
 Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought *Chapman Cohen* 3s. postage 6d.
 Freethought and Humanism in Shakespeare *David Tribe* 2s. postage 5d.
 Why Are We Here? (a poem) *David Tribe* 10s. postage 5d.
 An Analysis of Christian Origins *Georges Ory* 2s. 6d. postage 5d.
 Rome or Reason? *R. G. Ingersoll* 1s. postage 5d.
 The Realm of Ghosts *Eric Maple* 21s. postage 1s. 3d.
 Evolution of the Papacy *F. A. Ridley* 1s. postage 5d.
 Freedom's Foe—The Vatican *Adrian Pigott* 3s. postage 6d.
 The Vatican versus Mankind *Adrian Pigott* 4s. postage 6d.
 Catholic Action *Adrian Pigott* 6d. postage 3d.
 The Bible Handbook *G W. Foote & W. P. Ball* 5s. postage 8d.
 The Dark World of Witches *Eric Maple* 3s. 6d. postage 5d.
 Morals Without Religion *Margaret Knight* 10s. 6d. postage 8d.
 Honest to God *John T. Robinson* 5s. postage 6d.
 The New Reformation *John T. Robinson* 6s. postage 6d.
 The Honest to God Debate *John T. Robinson & David C. Edwards* 6s. postage 8d.
 Objections to Christian Belief *Various authors* 12s. 6d. postage 8d.
 Objections to Humanism *Various authors* 16s. postage 8d.
 The Bradlaugh Case *Walter L. Arnstein* 50s. postage 1s. 6d.
 Bertrand Russell The Passionate Sceptic *Alan Wood* 8s. 6d. postage 8d.
 Sceptical Essays *Bertrand Russell* 6s. postage 6d.
 Humanist Essays *Gilbert Murray* 7s. 6d. postage 8d.
 Life of Jesus *Ernest Renan* 2s. 6d. postage 5d.
 The Freethinker bound volume 1964 30s. postage 2s.
 All Things New *Ann Biezanek* 3s. 6d. postage 5d.
 The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists *Robert Tressell* 7s. 6d. postage 10d.
 The World's Living Religions *Geoffrey Parrinder* 2s. 6d. postage 6d.
 117 Days *Ruth First* 3s. 6d. postage 5d.
 Has Man a Future? *Bertrand Russell* 2s. 6d. postage 5d.
 Crimes of the Popes 6d. postage 3d.
 Frauds, Forgeries and Relics 9d. postage 3d.
 Handbook of Citizens Rights *N.C.C.L.* 2s. 6d. postage 5d.
 Straight and Crooked Thinking *Robert H. Thouless* 3s. 6d.
 Good English *G. H. Vallins* 3s. 6d.
 Better English *Vallins* 3s. 6d.
 The Best English *Vallins* 3s. 6d.
 You and Your Child *Dr. Winifred de Kok* 3s. 6d.
 Your Baby and You (illus.) *de Kok* 3s. 6d.
 Childbirth Without Fear (illus.) *Grantly Dick-Read* 5s.
 The Dark World of Witches (illus.) *Eric Maple* 3s. 6d.
 The Shoes of the Fisherman *Morris West* 3s. 6d.
 Good Speaking *Mrs. A. M. Henderson* 3s. 6d.
 Women and Fatigue *Dr. Marion Hilliard* 3s. 6d.
 The Pan Book of Great Composers *Gervase Hughes* 3s. 6d.
 The Pan Book of Opera *Arthur Jacobs and Stanley Sadie* 6s.
 The Explosion of British Society 1914-62 *Arthur Marwick* 3s. 6d.
 The Pan Book of Astronomy (illus.) *James Muirhead* 5s.
 The World's Living Religions *Geoffrey Parrinder* 3s. 6d.

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NOV 23 1965

LABADIE COLLECTION

The Freethinker

Volume LXXXV—No. 45

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

Price Sixpence

IN THE last few years, until recently almost unnoticed, an exciting new development in social welfare has been taking shape. This is "Domiciliary Birth Control"—contraceptive advice offered in their own homes to those who most need it. It is common enough to grumble and sneer at the stupidity of those people who, because of either ignorance or religious prejudice, persist in having enormous numbers of children they neither want nor can care for properly—children whose fate it is to be dragged up in neglect, often ill-treated, perhaps early finding themselves in children's homes or Approved schools, and who, perhaps worst of all, are likely to become the parents of the next generation of problem families. A number of doctors and welfare officials—mostly connected with the Family Planning Association—realised that it is often those most in need of contraceptive advice who find it hardest to obtain. A woman who has borne six or seven children in as many years is usually in such a state of physical and mental exhaustion that she will never find out for herself what she most needs to know. Instead of blaming such women, far-sighted authorities in a few areas are doing something to help them.

The Start

The first scheme was started in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1959, a second in Southampton in 1961, and a third in a small part of the London County Council area in 1963. In each case the arrangement has been for a doctor to call at homes of large families known to be in difficulties. For some the trouble was merely ill-health and poverty; others had serious housing problems; many had been on National Assistance; some were mental defectives; some of the parents had been in prison, some of the children in institutions. Every family was facing problems with which it was unable to cope. Clearly the prospects for further children born into these families was poor—and it was likely that a child would be born into each almost every year for some time to come.

Patience and Reward

Infinite patience was required from the teams of medical and social workers employed. Repeated calls were made at the patients' homes—as many as might be needed. Whenever possible both husband and wife were interviewed, so that they could agree on the importance of the matter and choose a contraceptive method acceptable to both. There were inevitable disappointments but, considering the characters of many of the couples involved, these were few. In Southampton 110 families produced 111 fewer babies in the first two years of the scheme than they had in the previous two years! The other results were similar. All the schemes decisively proved their worth during the experimental period. Voluntary organisations had given the money for the experiments, but happily the local authorities concerned were so impressed with the results and decided to continue the schemes themselves.

Regarded merely from the financial point of view, Domiciliary Birth Control is a sound investment. The medical

officer responsible for the London scheme has estimated an annual cost of about £8 per family. As the maternity grant is £22, and as the reduction in births is about one child per family every two years, it is clear that the saving in maternity grants alone should be enough to pay for the service. The saving in family allowances (£26 a year for each child), in National Assistance, to the health services and to local authorities add up to a significant sum. The

financial argument for this service is not the main one. It is worth running for its contribution to individual happiness and community health, and would be so even if it involved heavy net expenditure. Still, it is pleasant to find a valuable extension of social welfare

which need not be held back in the interests of economy, but will pay for itself almost immediately.

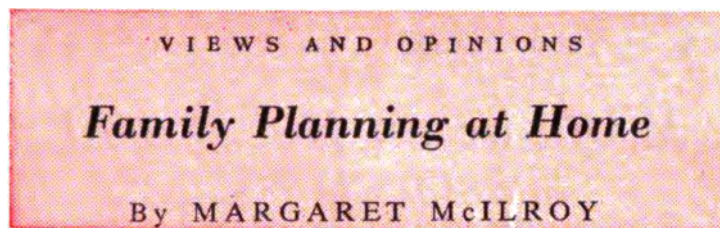
Benefits

But the financial saving is the least of it. There is the benefit to the families, when mothers released from the constant burden of pregnancy and tiny babies have at last energy to give to home-making. The relationship between husband and wife has often improved greatly too, once the fear of pregnancy is lifted from the wife. The community also gains in more important things than money. Grossly underprivileged children give rise to educational and disciplinary problems in the schools which make the teachers' task harder, and hold back educational advance. They are likely to grow up to be the parents of similar families themselves, thus perpetuating the problem. They may become habitual criminals, drifting in and out of prison throughout their depressing lives. Fine characters can of course emerge in the most unlikely places, and a few might have become valuable citizens, but the prospects for most of the children whose births have been prevented would have been bleak. It is pleasing, too, to note the improvement in the outlook for the existing children of these families.

Shyness and Ignorance

The Southampton team, with true devotion to scientific method, had intended to have a "control group". They expected that some of the families on their list would refuse their help, and the team could then have observed the downward progress of these people, and compared their fortunes to those of the couples accepting advice. But no such cases were forthcoming! Without exception, all those approached wanted help. Presumably there were Catholics among them, but if so it must have been ignorance and despair, rather than dogged adherence to their religion, which had brought them into their dismal plight. This suggests that the Church's ban on contraception is effective, less because Catholics fear to disobey the Church than because their training makes them too shy to ask for advice or too ignorant to know how to obtain it.

However, one extremely disturbing point does emerge. In an account of the London scheme we read: "On notification of the address of a problem family, the Medical Officer sought the agreement of the general practitioner to



visit and discuss with the wife her previous reproductive history and contraceptive experience. In a very small number of cases the general practitioner withheld his permission and no further action was taken". We are not told—was the Medical Officer?—on what grounds permission was refused. There could hardly be a medical reason, and one can only suppose the objection was religious. If this is so the general practitioners concerned acted with appalling high-handedness against the interests of patients whose wishes were not consulted, and who are unlikely ever to know of their doctor's action. Equally shocking is the spineless acquiescence of the officials, who, presumably in conformity with some peculiar idea of professional etiquette, gave general practitioners this right of veto. How necessary it is to remain on guard against the last-ditch resistance of religion to progress, and also against the encroachments of officialdom on the citizen's right to make his own decision in these matters!

The important part played by the Family Planning

Association in these developments should not go unrecognised. The original projects in Newcastle and Southampton were prompted by the efforts of two dedicated FPA doctors, and the FPA has, on the basis of its experience in this kind of work, prepared an outline for pilot domiciliary visiting schemes.

The value of Domiciliary Birth Control is now proved, and its extension to cover the whole country is an urgent necessity. Its value in promoting human happiness inside the families benefiting is matched only by its value in preventing some of the worst problems confronting teachers, welfare officers and probation officers from ever arising. And, wonder of wonders, this great extension of the social services would save, instead of costing, money! Doubtless all the forces of religious bigotry and of dull inertia will oppose it, but every Freethinker should be campaigning now for Parliament to make the provision of a Domiciliary Birth Control Service for parents in difficulties one of the statutory duties of local authorities.

Window on the World

By OTTO WOLFGANG

THE Pope's UNO performance was duly accompanied by the rapt shrieks of the cheerleaders of "public opinion"; what in fact it amounted to was an excuse for Pope Paul's wanderlust and a free window-dressing for Roman Catholicism. If the real purpose was peace, then the richest organisation in the world could have done more than just talk. It did nothing to convince the Americans that they are waging a war of destruction and intervention in a far-away Asian country under the pretext that they are curbing somebody else, represented as the Big Bad Wolf. Nor did it help the millions of miserable paupers in the Indian sub-continent who have been slaughtering each other for mainly religious animosities. Why did Paul VI not rather cease blocking progressive trends in the Vatican Council such as birth control?

Edward L. Erickson, leader of the Washington Ethical Society, had the courage to speak out his mind in a radio broadcast given in Washington, DC, when he stated that "our involvement in Vietnam is an abomination" committed by people with vested interests and under a pretense which is "so patently false that, if we used our brains at all, we could not give it credit". *American Freethinker*, (Jan.-Feb. 65).

The Philosophical Library, New York, has published an indictment of the Christian Churches for inculcating into the minds of their faithful the poison of anti-Semitism. It is Dagobert D. Runes's *The Jew and the Cross* (\$2.75) in which the author says: "There is no dialogue necessary between Christians and Jews. All we wish is the pontifical monologue to stop accusing the Jews of deicide". Well—it would improve the moral standing of Christianity today, but it wouldn't stop Jew-baiting which, in this country at least, has only recently been superseded by Negro-baiting.

In an exclusive article, *Le Nouvel Observateur* (September 7th) unravels the close connections between the political party of the Vatican—Democrazia Cristiana—and the infamous Mafia. Public demands to set up a commission to investigate into the Mafia reign of terror in Sicily were countered by the sop that all these stories were exaggerated inventions of romantic writers (comparable to the fancies written about Scotland Yard and all sorts of detectives). The Italian Christian Democrats, being the amalgam of reactionary landlords and fruit merchants, together with the forces of dynamic capitalism, feel the pinch of the agri-

cultural crisis, and by adapting itself to the demands of the Common Market, the party is now under the sway of its capitalist wing whose press (*La Stampa* among them) has at long last succeeded in getting the commission of inquiry set up.

The September issue of *Freigeistige Aktion* (Germany) draws attention to the fact that from 1877 up to Mussolini's reign, RI was not allowed to be taught inside Italian schools. Once in power, the Duce—married in a register office and with his children not baptised—immediately amended these "shortcomings" by marrying again, this time in church, and having his children properly baptised. In 1929 he concluded the Lateran Agreement by which the Vatican received another 1,750 mill. Lire, free of tax. Last year, Nenni, the Vice-Premier stated that "no socialist can tolerate tax exemption for the immensely rich Vatican, whilst the workers are being urged to accept a wage freeze".

L'Espresso has it that Signor Moro, the Prime Minister of the present coalition government, offered Cardinal Cicognani, the Vatican State Secretary, a compromise solution granting tax exemption provided the Holy See declared annually its holdings of Italian shares, upon which Cicognani threatened to rock the boat by selling Italian shares and exchanging them for foreign ones. (See also *Der Spiegel*, July 14th).

In May last 250 Marxists and Christian theologians had a discussion in Salzburg. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* commented that the Roman Catholics were unable to talk the Communists out of their atheism, but considering latest developments on either side of the Iron Curtain it was necessary to have a forum of information and explanation.

However, on June 30th, the *Dallas Morning News*, of Dallas, Texas, carried an editorial on Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (the section dealing with fair or equal employment practices). "The only exceptions allowed under the provision are", the paper said, "that employers, agencies and unions may discriminate" (1) against members of the Communist Party, (2) against atheists or (3) in "certain instances where religion, sex or national origin is a *bona fide* occupational qualification . . .".

Having become respectable in our affluent society, the Social Democrats have entirely broken with Marx and are

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Not So Hidden Persuaders

By KIT MOUAT

IN MUCH the same way as nations negotiate for peace in other people's wars while supplying the arms to keep those wars going, so men and women provide ammunition for the sex war in which we are all inevitably victims. Some of the most obvious aggressors are perhaps the advertisers who write slogans like:

"His woman — his drink." "His world of beautiful things — cars, yachts, girls . . ."

Put it the other way round for a moment:

"Her world of beautiful animals — poodles, kittens, men"; it's grim enough, although at least men are classified among the living possessions some women might hope to acquire.

And then there is the advertising that panders to the snob-appeal that still clings to Christian rituals. The photograph of a parish church with a group standing under the lychgate; black-skirted clergymen, mother carrying newly-baptised baby and so on. In the foreground are six parked cars. Underneath, the message reads:

"Your car is on the threshold of a new life, too, thanks to Shell Super Oil . . ."

Girl babies baptised in holy Shell grow up into reliable minis, able to resist lurking jaguars (or tigers in the male tanks). Use Super-Baptism! Top people rely on Shell! You too can have faith in God and the Advertisers! Long live the monopolies . . .!

I have been a little dismayed to find how many men in the Humanist Letter Network stipulate an age for the female companionship they are hoping to find through the post. Apart from the fact that this makes the work complicated for me (there are so few women anyway), it had never occurred to me that the value of my sex in friendship bore any relation to the faculty of women for child-bearing. Perhaps I am prejudiced. I had a grandmother and mother who were 13 and 5 years older than their husbands respectively and quite happy about it, and I am at an age when I don't feel any different from those who are 25 years younger or older than I am. At the same time I have to realise that while to one group I may appear relatively immature, to the other I am an antique. Women in middle-age, then, expect a sense of balance from men of their own generation; men who must realise just how little one does alter with the years and what a comfort it is not to be as young as we were.

I suppose it is largely a matter of sexual potency and wishful thinking. A man in his late 60s or even 70s may still be anxious to father a family, and therefore wants a woman who is still able to bear children; but the Network isn't a Marriage Bureau. Anyway, fatherhood on such a short-term policy is surely rather selfish? Parenthood means a sharing of the duties and the fun of children for some sixteen years or so. Being a father or mother (non-reverend and outside the church in which a mockery is made of the status) demands considerable physical endurance and a mental elasticity not necessarily preserved with the ability to beget. Perhaps nature has been kinder to women by making it quite clear when the time to cease being a parent has arrived.

Women seem more willing to see men as primarily human beings even if sexually unobtainable or unattractive. Yes, let's face it, women as well as men have their physical preferences, even if they are more likely than men to ignore the defects out of love or sympathy. Perhaps

men are the creators of the advertising nonsense just because they are No. 1 victims of the myth. The myth that Saint Paul made fashionable which at first denied women sex and still denies them humanity.

We constantly see this sort of thing: "How to keep your husband's eye on you. Answer: shampoo away grey the Poly way. It's so natural."

As "natural" as the celibacy of nuns or Vatican roulette. The idea that a man takes his eye off his wife (it is on a billiard ball in the picture) if her hair changes colour naturally is an extraordinary insult to the male. Or do British men really want women for ever to pretend about their ages? We may go grey, but at least we don't go thin on top, and what if women considered friendship or marital attraction impossible with the owner of a pot belly? I cannot believe that many men are so shallow or silly, and yet this is what the advertisers want us to believe. Come to think of it, we don't hear many men denying that the implications are true!

"One way to feel like a million dollars is to have a million dollars. Another is to have some Lady Manhattan (most girls happily admit they would like both!)." Oh they do, do they? "Lady Manhattan . . . a champagne cocktail of a perfume. Wear it [yes, it says 'wear', not 'drink'] and the world is your oyster". I never did like oysters anyway, and I would like the world a lot better without this nauseating attack on human sense. On the other hand, I love perfume, and why not? The nose is a most valuable organ, and too many of the smells of modern life need an antidote.

These sort of advertisements are found in *Nova*, "the new magazine for the new kind of woman", and if that's what the "new" kind of woman wants, thank goodness I'm not one of them. Not grey yet; just a little haggard, but who cares? And there we come down to it. None of us who are lucky in our marriages can afford to scoff at the woman dying her hair blue or at the man who runs after his own fading youth in the shape of a filly. It must be like having an ever-open wound to live believing that one can only receive love by giving an entirely false impression. Most women can remember, perhaps, the teenage hours when we wondered if any man would be able to face us first thing in the morning. (My own teenage was partly spent with the added burden of white shirts and collars, stud-marks in the neck and knickers called "black-outs".) Even then it never occurred to us that the suffering might not be all male, that we would be at the receiving end of a bristle-growth of beard and that the horrors (and honours) would be about equal between the sexes. For some women those hours of anxiety must be extended indefinitely, so that friendship becomes as remote as marriage was for the surplus women of the last era.

A mere birth date means nothing. It tells nothing about the capacity for honesty or companionship, love or sex, nor about anything at all save, perhaps, the physical ability to bear a child. Nor does it tell us any longer about experience. An unmarried woman is not necessarily any more sexually inexperienced than a man, nor waiting for proposals that never come. Age has nothing to do with friendship, in which men and women may one day begin to learn to help and understand one another a little better.

Just as I believe that Adam, too, has suffered from the

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This Believing World

SO EVEN the *Observer* (10/10/65) has at last acknowledged that there are two "disunited" parties in the Church of England, Evangelicals and non-Evangelicals! The latter have as their leader, the Bishop of Woolwich, whose teaching is regarded by Dr. J. I. Packer—the principal theologian of the National Assembly of Evangelicals—as leading to "disaster for the Christian faith in Britain". It is says Dr. Packer, both "Godless and Christless".

★

WHAT THE Evangelicals can do now, surely, is to prove the other party wrong. And why don't they? Is God sitting on a cloud in Heaven or is he not? If the Evangelicals maintain that he is, why don't they say so openly; and explain exactly where and how? Perhaps, they are as ashamed of this primitive conception as Dr. Robinson, but haven't the nerve to admit it. Perhaps they, like the Bishop also recognise that they are living in 1965 not 65!

★

JOHN OSBORNE, whose first successful play gave the name to the Angry Young Men of the post-war years, has written a number of other good plays, since—*The Entertainer* and *Inadmissible Evidence* to name but two. Perhaps his most ambitious, however, is *Luther*, which caused a good deal of controversy when first produced a few years ago. Now it has been seen on TV, though in a much-abridged form. Even so, we can imagine a lot of angry outbursts by Roman Catholics.

★

BUT FOR some of us the main lesson of the play was that, apart from his outbursts against indulgencies and similar corruptions in the Church of Rome, there was precious little difference between Luther's Protestantism and Catholicism. As Mr. Osborne presented it, this was rather like a religious version of Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

★

WE KNEW it would come—the protest against a coloured Archbishop. The *Daily Mirror* (15/10/65) published a photograph of one who is to be Archbishop of New Orleans; there was also a woman with a banner declaring "God does not recognise Negro priests, bishops". But if the lady is a Christian she must know that God does recognise Negroes as his children and is presumably prepared to accept them as his priests. Why, there are statues in existence depicting Jesus Christ as a Negro.

★

SOME SECTS of Christians (as mentioned in Notes and News last week) are disappointed that the Vatican Council has lessened the guilt of the Jews for the crucifixion. Some of the Greek dignitaries hold that "all believers in the Jewish faith should be held responsible for Christ's death" (*The Observer* 17/10/65). It is a pity that Jewish scholars do not declare that there is no evidence whatever of any trial or crucifixion. Some of them have at least demonstrated the impossibility of the trial as depicted in the New Testament.

★

BULLION and plate which the Church of England never uses should be handed over to the state in return for grants to restore and maintain church buildings, suggested the Rev. Stephen Hopkinson, Rector of Bobbingworth, Essex, in the latest issue of the Southwark diocesan review, *Bridge*. No one knows the value of the Church's property, he said, but it was one of the biggest holders in Britain. Apart, however, from "actual buildings and available sites", it had "a great deal of treasure hidden away in safes, museums and the like". Again, "no one can estimate the value in terms of bullion alone of the plate and other valuables

which are never actually in use". And Mr. Hopkinson saw "neither sense nor moral justification in retaining technical 'ownership' of objects only to be shown as museum pieces". But isn't the Church itself something of a museum piece?

WINDOW ON THE WORLD

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now increasingly protesting their Christian beliefs. The philosopher Dr. Gunther Nenning, president of the Austrian Union of Journalist has just published a book, *Europa Verlag*, in which he proclaims "Social Democracy" as the modern Gospel, asserting "No longer can Socialists evade the fact that there is a God". (*Kurier*, Vienna, September 27th).

In 1950, Holland's State Institute for War Documentation commissioned Dr. J. Presser, University Professor of History, to write about the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" in the Netherlands. The Hamburg weekly, *Die Zeit*, of September 10th has dealt with the first two volumes (on the persecution and extermination of Holland's Jewry between 1940-45), and Rudolf Augstein chief-editor of another Hamburg weekly, *Der Spiegel*, on February 15th, took the Roman Catholic Church to task for her part in these persecutions. She had been very dilatory in confessing any complicity. Far from it, she presented herself as the only opponent of Hitlerism and shouted down any disagreeing criticism. Immediately after 1945 she even mustered the bold effrontery to arrogate anew the right to direct the political conscience of their faithful. "It cannot be stressed too much", Augstein said, "that the political opinions and recommendations and the actions of the Church are rarely inspired by the Holy Ghost, but rather by her overriding self-interest".

Among the millions of Roman Catholics in the Reich, only seven had he courage to rebel publicly and to refuse, in principle, to serve in the unjust war; and six of them were executed, with the full approval of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. In 1945 the people were made answerable for Nazi crimes and Nazi support, but not a single bishop was among those who lost their jobs. Why this different measure? Augstein sums up that, "The Church has to watch not only our beliefs but—as she pretends—also our morals . . . consequently her own morals must stand examination in the light of her political past".

NOT SO HIDDEN PERSUADERS

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fable that Eve grew out of a bone near his heart rather than from one near his brain, so I believe today men may suffer most from their inability to see themselves clearly and to consider women as human beings in whom sex and maternity are only parts. And here I come back to my old hobby-horse of co-education. So long as boys and girls are educated separately in institutions that ape the monastery and nunnery, too many of them will grow up as unrealistic romantics or homosexuals.

The advertisers, the men who are taking over the authority of the priests and preserving the old religious myths, are constantly providing weapons in the war between the sexes and making it all the more difficult for us to enjoy human relationships with both sexes and with all ages. This is a high price to pay for petrol, perfume and piety. It is not Shell or Baptism or Lady Manhattan we need; it is some urgent and energetic new thinking. Surely Secularists should be able to lead the way.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

OUTDOOR

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Abortion Law Reform Association (Kensington Central Library, Phillimore Walk, London, W.8), Saturday, November 6th, 6.30 p.m.: Film, "Abortion and the Law". Forum on Abortion: Speakers include DR. ANNE BIEZANEK, DR. EUSTACE CRESSER, DR. DAVID KERR, M.P., and MISS DEE WELLS.

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group (Regency House, Oriental Place), Sunday, November 7th, 5.30 p.m.: Dr. JOHN LEWIS, "Morality Without Religion".

Bristol Humanist Group (Transport House, Victoria Street), Tuesday, November 9th, 7.30 p.m.: MRS. R. SMITH, "Positive Materialism".

Kingston and Surbiton Branches NSS (The White Hart Hotel, Kingston Bridge), Friday, November 5th, 8 p.m.: L. EBURY, Subject to be announced.

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, November 7th, 6.30 p.m.: ALEX ROBERTSON, "Crime—Punishment or Treatment?"

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, November 7th, 7.30 p.m.: ERIC KENTON, "The Press Council and the *South London Press*".

Richmond and Twickenham Humanist Group (Room 4, Community Centre, Sheen Road), Thursday, November 11th, 8 p.m.: Dr. STANLEY RUNDLE, "Minor Drugs and Minors".

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, November 7th, 11 a.m.: F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT, "Law and Morals". Tuesday, November 9th, 7.30 p.m.: CELIA FREMLIN, "A Housewife looks at Affluence".

Notes and News

THE BBC's play of the month on October 19th, was John Osborne's *Luther*. Unfortunately, it was slashed disastrously to compress it into an hour and a half. Many fine speeches were mutilated. The Knight who introduces each act was dispensed with, the great climax of the smashing of the banner after Luther's support of the nobles against the peasants, was therefore lost. Alec McCowen seemed not quite right in the title role—certainly not as good as Albert Finney, the original Luther—while the Tetzels of Patrick Magee had nothing of the exuberance of Peter Bull's indulgence vendor. Altogether, we agree with Philip Oakes (in a BBC-2 interview) that the play was "truncated" and "overproduced"; and that we should have been given three hours of Osborne. *Luther* is worth it. In our opinion it is the best play of our best living playwright. Mr. Oakes's interviewer recalled that, when first produced, the play upset both Catholics and Protestants, and asked "Did it upset you?" As an Atheist, Mr. Oakes replied, "No".

ON THE subject of plays—and especially plays disliked by Catholics—we learn that Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy* is to be staged in Chicago in February next year.

THE futility of Pope Paul's speech to the United Nations was splendidly demonstrated by James Cameron, in an article in the *New Statesman* (22/10/65). The Pope urged the nations of the world to ban war and the delegates and the press "gave it better coverage than the Sermon on the Mount". Both they and His Holiness should, Mr. Cameron said, "have boned up on their contemporary history". War has been banned; the "whole thing is illegal" and "has been for a generation". It was officially outlawed in the Covenant of the League of Nations and the process has since been repeated time and again. We have "done a great deal of formal war-outlawing to no great purpose. Every nation that formally renounces war . . . does so with the built-in proviso that its own personal interests shall not be impeded nor its own national style be cramped". The Pope, in fact, perpetuated what Mr. Cameron called "the quaint old notion" that war can be got rid of by uttering phrases about it, "like indigestion or BO".

★

"WORDS will always win", Mr. Cameron added. "Thus the reverence for a Vatican that denounces war while carefully refraining from criticising those at the moment waging it . . .".

★

THE REVIVAL of the worker priest experiment will be widely welcomed in France, according to the *Guardian* Paris correspondent (25/10/65), though he didn't indicate how "widely" or among whom. It would, he admitted, encounter rigorous opposition from right-wing Catholic quarters; and it will, we suggest, be treated with indifference by the majority of French workers. The wide welcome, we can only assume, will come from the more progressive Catholic clergy and laity, who are concerned about the "decline in Christian loyalty of the working class". Will this experiment be any more successful than the last, which was suppressed under Pope Pius XII? We cannot believe so.

★

THE FRENCH episcopacy has said that the choice of priests to work full time in factories and on building sites will "have to conform to certain precise conditions", and that there will be "close relations with other priests and working-class Catholic Action militants in the sector in which they work". The worker priest will be able to join a trade union but "in view of the fact that temporal tasks are the proper role of the militant worker", the priest will "abstain from taking any responsibilities in political and syndical action". The trouble last time was, of course, that the worker priests became too worldly-minded. As *Time* remarked on September 28th, 1959: "By 1953, it was obvious that something had gone wrong; of almost 150 worker-priests, some 20 had married and left the Church, while others had joined Communist unions or Red-line causes. Pope Pius XII sternly limited *les prêtres ouvriers* to three hours of factory life a day, but only a handful submitted; others left the Church, and only 25 continued in their mission, eventually won limited approval from their bishops". But desperate cuts must have desperate cures.

★

THE Agnostics Adoption Society has announced the appointment of Mrs. Daphne Bosch as organising secretary, and Mrs. Kirstine Richards as case worker. The address of the Society is 55 Dawes Street, London, S.E.17, and the telephone number, Rodney 9660. An article by David Tribe on "Agnostic Adoption", which first appeared in THE FREETHINKER, has been published as a leaflet, and is available free from the National Secular Society.

Sir Robert Stout, Charles Bradlaugh and the Irish

By RICHARD P. DAVIS

IN THE 1880s the secularist movement was flourishing and influential in New Zealand. Dunedin possessed a strong Freethought Association and, intermittently, a weekly paper, the *Echo*. From 1880 to 1883 the *Echo* was edited by Robert Stout, one of the greatest figures in New Zealand history. As Premier (1884-1887) and as Chief Justice (1899-1926), Stout has left an indelible imprint on our national life. His interests were so wide that he was able to talk and write incessantly on numerous subjects. Before returning to politics in 1884 he devoted considerable time to Rationalism: lecturing regularly to the Freethinkers' Association, giving funeral addresses for departed members and writing much of the *Echo*. In late 1883 the latter was forced to suspend publication as a result of advertisers' hostility and Stout's other commitments.

At this time freethinkers everywhere were shocked by the treatment of Charles Bradlaugh, who had been elected to the British House of Commons for Northampton in 1880. Bradlaugh, a man of immense courage and physical strength, was a powerful exponent of three causes which horrified the comfortably pious Victorian middle classes — atheism, birth control and republicanism. To make matters worse, Bradlaugh was in the habit of speaking directly to the people in language which they could understand. Could the complacent British MPs endure such a colleague? The answer was soon given, in spite of the fact that there were already freethinkers in both the Liberal and Conservative parties.

A complicated struggle in both parliament and the law courts ensued which dragged on for years. In their speeches Bradlaugh's opponents showed a complete lack of decency and good taste. Though his leader Gladstone supported him, Bradlaugh was allowed neither to affirm his allegiance nor to take the normal parliamentary oath on the Bible, something other freethinkers had done with reservations. Three times Bradlaugh's election was quashed and three times his constituents re-elected him. He did, however, manage in the middle of the struggle to sit precariously as an MP for nine months between 1880 and 1881. He was very active. Among other liberal actions he brought forward the question of the Maoris imprisoned without trial for participating in Te Whiti's passive resistance movement against land confiscation in Taranaki. When excluded from the Commons in August, 1881, it took ten strong constables to remove Bradlaugh from the House by force.

The *Echo* gave full support to Bradlaugh, and subscriptions came in from Nelson, the West Coast and Christchurch for a fund opened on his behalf. For Stout the issue was complicated by his other activities. He was an uncompromising advocate of the New Zealand system of free, secular and compulsory education at a time when the Catholic clergy were aggressively demanding state aid for their schools. They tried, in fact, to force the Catholic laymen, most of whom were Irish, to deliver a bloc vote against any parliamentary candidate, who, like Stout, opposed their claims. But many New Zealand Irish almost venerated Stout for some lectures he had delivered in 1881 supporting Irish Home Rule and justifying the Irish Land League in its fight against landlord tyranny.

This defence was sorely needed. The cable reports published in the New Zealand press invariably exhibited anti-Irish bias and editorial comment was equally hostile.

Bradlaugh, like Stout, had long been an advocate of Irish Home Rule. His eye-witness account of the brutal eviction of an Irish peasant family was quoted with approval by Catholic priests. When allowed to sit in parliament, Bradlaugh normally voted with Parnell's Irish Nationalists and once led the party in Parnell's absence. At first the Protestant Parnell and some Catholic Irishmen repaid the compliment by voting for Bradlaugh in divisions on the oath. Then in 1883 there was a *volte face* and nearly all the Irish MPs, including Parnell, ranged themselves solidly against Bradlaugh. Stout was outraged. This, he expostulated, was clerical dictation at its worst. He soon found an opportunity to show his disapproval.

In 1883 John Redmond, later leader of the Irish Nationalists, was sent to collect money for his cause in Australasia. His tour was moderately successful in spite of considerable opposition. The brutal Phoenix Park murders of 1882 were generally, though incorrectly, attributed to Redmond's party. Worse still, the Pope, by condemning a collection for Parnell, had sown doubt in the minds of many Australasian Irish. Consequently influential Catholics avoided Redmond. Stout, too, announced his opposition in a letter to the press. He denied that the Irish Nationalists had connived at murder and asked that a fair hearing should be given to Redmond. He argued, however, that to assist the Irish MPs after their treatment of Bradlaugh — and Redmond had voted against Bradlaugh in an early division — would be "to strike a blow at human liberty." This letter was published in several papers and must have carried weight, as Stout had been an early critic of Irish wrongs.

When Redmond addressed a meeting at Ashburton a hostile amendment relating to Bradlaugh was proposed from the floor. Redmond countered by arguing that the Irish had voted against Bradlaugh not because of his atheism, but because of his opposition to Ireland. Stout immediately wrote to the press challenging Redmond to substantiate his statement. He appended a list of Bradlaugh's divisions showing that Bradlaugh had voted with the Irish except when they were deliberately obstructive. Redmond did not accept this challenge, but one of his New Zealand supporters was forced to admit that religion was the decisive issue. This is also the verdict of W. L. Arnstein, a recent historian of the affair.

Stout at this time also maintained a vigorous attack on the Catholic church in the *Echo*, in lectures and in the daily press. The Irish, he said, would never be free until they broke the back of the clerical tyranny that enslaved them: secular education was their only hope. He cited statistics to prove that more delinquents were produced by Catholic schools than by secular schools. Stout, however, still believed in Irish Home Rule which he hoped would loosen the priestly grip on the country. In spite of these views, there were Irish Catholics in 1884 offering assistance in the election which established Stout as one of the first openly freethinking premiers in the British Commonwealth.

The story has an epilogue. In 1889 another Irish MP

John Dillon, brought a delegation to New Zealand. This time Stout was one of his chief supporters and spoke more eloquently for Ireland than Dillon himself. Why? One reason was the settlement of the Bradlaugh case. In 1886 a new Speaker allowed Bradlaugh to take the oath without further argument. Bradlaugh then fought so hard for Gladstone's unsuccessful Irish Home Rule Bill that an Irish MP apologised: "Mr. Bradlaugh, you have been the best Christian of us all." When Bradlaugh later introduced a bill allowing MPs to affirm their allegiance there was virtually no opposition from the Irish and many voted for the bill which was passed. Finally, when Bradlaugh was dying in 1891, Gladstone persuaded the Commons to strike the 1881 resolution excluding Bradlaugh from its records. Some of the men who had opposed Bradlaugh, including Parnell, later suffered themselves at the hands of clerical authority.

Bradlaugh and Stout were fine examples of 19th century Liberalism. Both detested injustice and poverty, but neither believed that socialism was the answer. They emphasised the responsibility of the individual and this made them ardent temperance reformers. Both had legal training and were exceptionally good platform speakers. They never met. But Bradlaugh, when contemplating a visit to New Zealand, said that its chief attraction would be the opportunity for talking to Sir Robert.

[Reprinted from the *New Zealand Rationalist & Humanist*, August-September, 1965.]

Malcolm Muggeridge and Charles Bradlaugh

By H. CUTNER

AS AN interviewer on TV and as a literary man in general, Malcolm Muggeridge has made a big name for himself for many years. But when it comes to writing a review for the *Observer*, (29/8/65) on such a giant as Charles Bradlaugh, it is not quite good enough, as Mr. Muggeridge does, to say he has not read Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's important biography, nor therefore that very fine part of it by John M. Robertson dealing so fully not only with Bradlaugh's philosophy, his atheism and his Malthusianism, but also in detail with his Parliamentary career.

The book under review is Professor Walter L. Arnstein's *The Bradlaugh Case* (which I have not yet seen), but those of us who have read Robertson will at least know a good deal of the period in Bradlaugh's life in Parliament and particularly about one of the most disgraceful episodes in the history of our Parliament when, though he had been elected four times as the member for Northampton, he was not allowed to take his seat and once actually thrown out of the House of Commons by ten policemen. Professor Arnstein no doubt goes fully into the story, and even reproduces Sir John Tenniel's *Punch* cartoon, where Bradlaugh is shown on some steps with a number of boots, shoes, sticks and umbrellas behind him. The truth was something quite different.

On being elected, Bradlaugh asked to affirm instead of taking the oath, but this was disallowed. He had no belief in God but was prepared to follow the law and take the oath, pointing out at the time that the words had no meaning for him. This was refused. Bradlaugh thereupon had to go to Northampton and be elected again, but he was still not allowed to take his seat. He pleaded his case before the Bar of the House of Commons and was refused once more.

Bradlaugh, as a properly elected Member of Parliament in the end tried to take his seat but was even refused

admission to the House. When he did enter "ten powerful constables aided by four of the messengers . . . were set upon him"; says John M. Robertson in his little book, *Charles Bradlaugh*, "and in a flash of fury at the ignoble device he resisted with all the strength of a great frame . . . the ten gladiators had a terrific task struggling desperately down the lobby stairs and all the way to the entrance . . .".

The cartoon by *Punch* shows nothing of the "ten gladiators", nothing of Bradlaugh's coat being torn, or indeed that there had been any struggle at all. Had Mr. Muggeridge tried to find out the truth, or even if the *Observer* had known what really happened, it would never have been reproduced.

However, what does Mr. Muggeridge really think of the incident? Just what one would have expected from him. He says,

If he [Bradlaugh] had taken the oath when he first presented himself to Parliament with whatever reservation he cared to make privately, as a good many Members did, all would have been well; but he first claimed the right to attest as a non-believer and, when this was disallowed, offered to take the oath, and "to call upon the name of God" which to him, as he explained, was a meaningless expression".

Some non-believers have adopted this attitude when elected to Parliament, but Bradlaugh was of different stature in an age of what J. M. Robertson called "revolting hypocrisy". In any case, when the Conservatives came into power, he was allowed to take his seat, and he promptly introduced his Oaths Bill which permits anyone to affirm where before he had to take the oath.

Mr. Muggeridge could not resist telling us how, in his young days, people declared that the late Horatio Bottomley was "the fruit of the illicit union" of Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant despite discrepancies in the dates". And Mr. Muggeridge had read *The First Five Lives of Annie Besant* where Bradlaugh is mentioned enough, "but he remains a shadowy figure". Bradlaugh "a shadowy figure" with his aggressive atheism, his aggressive Malthusianism, his iconoclastic debates, not only with first-class parsons, but with eminent Socialists; and above all his fight for the right of every man or woman to practice birth control, which led to the famous "Knowlton pamphlet" trial—in which both Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant risked a heavy prison sentence, and was the most talked of trial of the day. All these and much more, yet for Mr. Muggeridge, Bradlaugh is "a shadowy figure". It is amazing.

After all this, Mr. Muggeridge assures us that "Bradlaugh's subsequent performance in the House was disappointing" for "it gradually dawned upon his opponents and detractors that they had little to fear from one whose subversive attitudes were too idiosyncratic to be dangerous"; after which we are told that "as Professor Arnstein abundantly demonstrates, Bradlaugh was a doughty performer".

Exactly what Mr. Muggeridge expected Bradlaugh to do in the very few years he was in Parliament after what Robertson called his "Titanic parliamentary struggle", we are not told by Mr. Muggeridge, though as he lay dying, Parliament thoroughly ashamed of it and the ignoble part it had played, expunged from the journals of the House of Commons "the old resolutions excluding him". But Bradlaugh died before he could be told. And Mr. Muggeridge never mentions it.

If Mr. Muggeridge had read Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's biography, and in particular the patient and careful exposition of Bradlaugh's philosophy as well as the hugely detailed account of his parliamentary struggles, he would have seen how such a review as he wrote of Professor Arnstein's book was not only unfair but completely inadequate.

HELPING SOUTH AFRICAN RATIONALISTS

AS FREETHINKER readers know, the ban imposed by the Minister of Justice prevents Dr. Edward Roux from taking any active part in the affairs of the Rationalist Association of South Africa. He is prohibited from attending gatherings, both public meetings and committee meetings, and also from editing the Association's monthly paper, the *Rationalist* or "preparing anything for publication". There has been only one person able and willing to take over the editorial work and other jobs connected with seeing the journal through the press, and that is Dr. Roux's wife Winifred. Other members of the small committee do what they can to help. The paper continues to appear, but we learn that many readers have failed to renew their subscriptions during the past year. This is understandable under the prevailing conditions of a semi-totalitarian state. Quite a number of small independent periodicals in South Africa have recently ceased publication, a fact which was noted by Helen Suzman, the only member of the Progressive Party still in parliament. Dr. Roux does not think that his rationalist activity was the main reason for the ban, but it may have been an additional cause. In any case the *Rationalist* is now feeling the breeze, but the Rationalist Association intends to carry on if it possibly can.

Its survival obviously depends largely on what happens in South Africa itself, but overseas rationalists and humanists may be able to help. A hundred overseas subscribers at 10s. each, for instance would definitely boost the Association's finances. The total cost of producing and distributing the journal is only about £200 per year. 1,000 copies are printed of each issue, but most of these are distributed as propaganda tracts. By subscribing to this fine little paper British readers could show their sympathy and help the South African Rationalists financially.

We understand that the National Secular Society and the Rationalist Press Association are also helping the South African Rationalists by gifts of literature.

CORRESPONDENCE

VERY DIFFERENT

In your issue dated October 22nd, Mr. E. Markley criticises Mr. Micklewright for having, in his televised discussion with Dr. Soper, stated that our only information about the historic Jesus comes from a few fragments collected thirty or forty years after his death. He then applies the same criterion to Plato, Aristotle and Plutarch.

But there is all the difference in the world. These Greeks were *writers*, and their works, or some of them, have been preserved and handed down to us. I do not know of any mention or hint that Jesus ever *wrote* anything. Certainly nothing has survived, which would be remarkable if in fact he ever did commit his ideas to paper. Was he illiterate or semi-literate? Could there have been any literate people in the village of Nazareth where he plied his trade for most of his life? And could this have any connection with his hatred of the Scribes?

A. DOUGLAS.

THE MAN JESUS

What Mr. H. Cutner has to say about what my letter reminds him of is entirely irrelevant to the subject under discussion; in fact, the analogy he gives is entirely as false as his views on Sir James Frazer's alleged change of mind regarding the historical existence of Jesus.

I am not a young evangelist, nor am I horrified at Mr. Cutner's views on Jesus, but I will not be led astray by them. What Mr. Gladstone believed in is irrelevant, seeing that there is a vast difference between Sir James Frazer and Mr. Gladstone. Frazer is recognised as one of the greatest authorities in his field of thought, whereas Gladstone was a politician, and therefore knew little about anthropology and mythology. Mr. Cutner says that he is not afraid of big names, that may be so, but he has a liking for little names like that of Dr. Couchoud. Why should I take Dr. Couchoud's word before that of Frazer, because he happens to be of the same belief as Mr. Cutner? I can see no reason to

do so, and therefore I am on the side of atheists like Shelley and H. G. Wells who refused to deny Christ's existence.

The real trouble with Mr. Cutner is that he has no real big names and authorities to support his case, as even a great atheist like H. G. Wells is not on his side.

Wells knew the mythicist case and all the rest, so why did he not accept it? Perhaps Mr. Cutner will answer that question, and perhaps not. Anyway when I get to reading Dr. Couchoud's book (if I can find it) I may let Mr. Cutner know all about it. By the way, I don't believe in angels or devils, although I believe life is a sort of mystery.

R. SMITH.

THE LEOPARD IN A NEW SUIT

Miss Phyllis K. Graham (THE FREETHINKER, 8/10/65) has done a good work of statistics of calumnies against the Pope, including John XXIII, and the Church. Observing her ability in this matter, I take the liberty to invite her to note two other statistics: one regarding the works of the Church for the poor all over the world, such as hospitals, houses for the poor, schools, universities, providing food and clothing, the missions, etc.; and the other regarding similar philanthropic good made by Secularists.

G. M. PARIS, OP. (Malta).

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The Freethinker

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THE recent visit of Pope Paul to the USA, constitutes undoubtedly an important development in the new papal strategy inaugurated by his predecessor, Pope John. For whilst medieval popes moved freely about Europe, since the counter-reformation, popes have only left Rome under duress—as, for example, when Pope Pius VII was forcibly abdicated and kept under “house arrest” in France by Napoleon until the latter’s downfall in 1814. In particular, since the incorporation of the Papal States into Italy in 1870, the popes have remained obstinately shut up as prisoners of what in now the Vatican City.

By his successive visits to Jerusalem, India, and now the USA, Pope Paul VI has decisively broken with the post-Reformation tradition. Perhaps after all there is something in a name, for was not St. Paul pre-eminently in ecclesiastical tradition, the Apostle to the Gentiles?

India versus Pakistan

This is hardly the place to deal in any detail with the long term aspects of this new papal grand strategy. For here is a veritable counter-reformation inaugurated by the late Pope John; the counter-reformation of the 20th century—against atheism and no longer merely Protestantism. This counter-reformation is being continued by Pope Paul—albeit with a less dynamic personality than his predecessor—and the papal trip to New York was undoubtedly part of it.

However, the actual reason—or excuse—for the Pope’s flying visit to the UN, is also somewhat ironic. Its ostensible purpose was to end the war between India and Pakistan, a war caused ultimately by religion if ever there was one.

Muslim versus Hindu

It is true that the immediately operative *casus belli* between India and Pakistan, was a secular one. But the ambiguity involved in the political question as to whether Kashmir should ultimately accede to India or Pakistan is really a religious one. For, prior to 1947, the native state of Kashmir was ruled (under the suzerainty of the Anglo-Indian Raj) by an Indian maharajah of Hindu antecedents, Sir Hari Singh (who in the early 1920s made a sensational appearance in the London courts) who however, ruled over a predominantly Muslim population. But in any case, the very fact of the creation of Pakistan in 1947 was religious. Had India only possessed a single creed—whether Hindu or Muslim—the war over Kashmir would not have evenuated.

Divide and Rule

For ever since the end of the British Raj, the old Indian empire has been artificially divided into two rival and utterly hostile states: India (Bharat) and Pakistan, and the latter name spells the whole programme in itself. For Pakistan means “the land of the pure”; that is, of the (Muslim) True Believers in direct contrast to the Hindu affairs (i.e. infidels) across the Indian border; a Muslim theocracy in which church and state are ultimately united by a sacrosanct legal code dictated by Allah in the Koran

to his holy prophet, Mohammed. Pakistan is historically merely the last of a series of Muslim states established as the result of the jihad (holy war) upon the infidel soil of (Hindu) India, which included the predecessors of England as rulers of the Indian sub-continent, the Moghul Empire of Delhi (c. 1550-1800).

The creation of the exclusively Muslim state of Pakistan—accompanied by appalling religious pogroms, massacres of religious minorities on both sides of the India-Pakistan border—was ultimately due to belief in that time-honoured policy of divide and rule, ultimately upon religious grounds. England, which a generation earlier had divided Ireland between Catholic Eire and Protestant Ulster, in 1947 divided the Indian sub-continent between predominantly Hindu India and exclusively Muslim Pakistan; a division which would surely have delighted the heart of the original “Old Nick”, Niccolò Machiavelli himself.

And it is worth noting that, whilst the Indian Muslim leader, Jinnah, and his co-religionists in the Muslim League had been agitating for the creation of a Muslim state, they did not actually expect to get it, even in the last days of the British Raj. They were actually prepared to settle for self-government in several Indian provinces with predominantly Muslim populations.

Religion and War

The Indo-Pakistan war itself, represents the culmination of a millenium of Hindu-Muslim holy wars since the days of Mahmud of Ghazni, and of the first Muslim invaders of India. To be sure, whilst the indigenous Indian creeds of Hinduism and Buddhism have usually been tolerant religious cults, Islam, the cult of Mohammed and the Koran, like its Jewish predecessor the belligerent Old Testament cult of Jehovah, has always regarded the jihad (holy war) as a normal institution and even as a religious duty. Most Muslim empires from the Arab successors of Mohammed himself (7th century), to the Turkish sultans in Europe and to the Moghuls in India itself, conquered their vast empires by the sword at the expense of infidel regimes.

But it is really rather ironic that Pope Paul should intervene in what is in effect a holy war between Muslims and Hindus. Historically, and precisely with relation to the holy wars, the Christian Churches and the Church of Rome in particular have proved themselves repeatedly to be the most apt pupils of Islam in this very matter of holy wars! For as the German historian Karl Kautsky pointed out long ago, the Christian crusades originated in direct imitation of the Muslim jihad.

From the days of Charlemagne (800 AD), who converted the German Pagans with fire and sword, down to the wars of religion (which were really crusades) against the Protestant Reformation, which culminated in the Thirty Years War (1618-48) by reducing Germany to cannibalism, the Catholic Church has regularly and ruthlessly waged war against “Turks, heretics and unbelievers”, often including

the very Muslims from whom the Church had (according to Kautsky) borrowed the practice of the jihad. I rather doubt, however, whether Pope Paul even alluded to these chapters in the bloodstained annals of his Church in his recent address to the UN.

"Not Peace but a Sword"

If one examines the evolution of Christianity, one will surely be compelled to agree with the titular founder when he stated (or is reputed to have stated) that he came not to bring peace but a sword. For the genuine Christian

apostles of peace of whom we hear so much today—such men as St. Francis, Tolstoy and Schweitzer—have surely been exceptions rather than the rule. One could perhaps add that if Pope Paul is actually what he claims to be—"The Pope of Peace"—he too, is surely in a papal minority; and what is true of Christianity would also seem to be true of religion in general. For such peaceful creeds as, say, Buddhism and Quakerism are also in a minority. As an old Victorian Freethinker once aptly remarked: "Religion has usually added fresh causes of dissension to the troubled annals of the world".

The Philosophy of Predestination

By RUDOLF WILSON

THE Calvinist doctrine of predestination is derived from certain passages in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, notably Rom. 8, 28-30, and 9, 21-23. These may be summarised as follows. All things work for the good of those who love God and have been chosen by him by his purpose. They have been chosen so as to resemble the Son of God. In this way Jesus became the foremost among a band of brothers. These named individuals have been given righteousness and are destined to glory (presumably in heaven). The action of God is compared to that of a potter making vessels from clay. Some of the vessels are formed to receive honour and others dishonour. These latter will eventually suffer the anger of God and be destroyed. The vessels of wrath, destined to destruction, are made by God so that he may demonstrate his power to the other vessels, the vessels of mercy, and so that they may realise the richness of the glory which he has prepared for them.

This statement by Paul explains why both righteous individuals and sinners are to be found among men. It suggests that there can be no changing over of one sort into the other, for God has determined beforehand the nature and eventual destiny of every person. It also makes quite clear what is in store for the righteous on the one hand and the sinners on the other.

The doctrine of predestination raises some interesting problems, in ethics, in philosophy, in psychology.

Assuming you are a Calvinist, and therefore believe what Paul enunciated, you must accept that no matter what you do, what sort of life you lead, your ultimate fate, in the glory of heaven or in the damnation of hell, has already been determined. Why therefore should you trouble to be righteous rather than unrighteous, particularly if being righteous is going to be dull and oppressive, while being unrighteous means having a good time?

If you are an ordinary member of a Calvinist Church, e.g. the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, righteousness implies a definite type of behaviour. It means keeping the ten commandments as interpreted by the Dutch Reformed Church. But it means also, among other things, going to church every Sunday in a black suit and not working in your garden, playing tennis, swimming or going fishing. It means reading a passage in the Bible every night and saying grace before meals. In fact it involves the type of behaviour which we in South Africa attribute to a good "Dopper" or puritan.

What inducement is there to compel the Dopper to behave as he does? Does his conformity to the rules of his religion convince him that he is one of the "vessels of mercy" and not one of the "vessels of wrath"? In fact it does. But how can he be so sure of this?

There is an interesting section in A. J. Ayer's *The Prob-*

lem of Knowledge (Pelican Books) which deals with the philosophical aspects of this question. Ayer is discussing the theory of causation. Logicians tell us that for every effect there are a number, sometimes a very large number of necessary causes. At sea level, pure water in an open vessel on a burning gas ring will boil at 100 deg. C. At the top of Mont Blanc it will, assuming all other necessary conditions are unaltered, boil at 85 deg. C. The sufficient cause of the water boiling at the lower temperature is of course, the reduced atmospheric pressure. Note that in this example cause and effect are thought of as occurring simultaneously without a time sequence being involved.

On the other hand consider a man in hospital with a broken arm. He broke his arm because he slipped on a banana skin. The banana skin was dropped by a boy, who bought some bananas with money his uncle had given him, because it was his birthday, because he was born on a certain date so many years before, because his mother conceived him nine months prior to that date, etc., etc. In this case we think of cause always preceding effect.

But Ayer asks, "Why cannot cause succeed effect?" If the banana skin is a necessary condition of the broken arm, is not the broken arm a sufficient condition of the banana skin? No banana skin, no broken arm; but, equally well, no broken arm, no banana skin! It would seem that only a professional philosopher would get any entertainment out of considering such an odd question.

However, Ayer goes on to say: "Yet surely no one in his senses would set himself to bring about a past event. The only example I can think of is that of certain Calvinists and even this example may be fanciful. It does however explain behaviour which otherwise would seem irrational. Believing, as they did, in predestination, in the sense that their deity had saved or damned them once for all before they were even born, they were nevertheless, on religious grounds, extremely puritanical. They believed that only salvation mattered, and yet they attached great importance to their conduct, while being convinced that it would make no difference to what lay in store for them.

"But now suppose that they also believed that only those whom the deity had elected were capable of being virtuous. In that case, being one of the elect would be a necessary condition for being virtuous, from which it would follow that being virtuous was a sufficient condition of having been chosen one of the elect. If this was their reasoning, then the goal of their puritanism may have lain not in the future but in the past. We may suppose that they abstained from sin in order to have been saved".

A psychologist not overmuch concerned with abstruse problems in philosophy could venture a more obvious
(Concluded on page 364)

Neglected Facts About Albert Schweitzer

By E. C. VANDERLAAN

THE TITLE does not hint at any exposure of secrets. It is all there in Schweitzer's book *Out of My Life*. But for some reason all the emphasis, in the comment one saw, was on his career as a doctor in Lambarene, Africa, supposedly a perfect example of the Christian in action. Yet there is ample material for attacks upon him from the side of orthodox Christianity. If there have been any such attacks upon his heresy, they have not come to public notice. Instead all the world wondered (quite rightly) at this theologian, organist and physician who gave up a promising academic career to minister to the most deprived and retarded of our fellow men.

Schweitzer the theologian? Yes, but what a theologian! In the narrowest sense of the word, a theologian is one who expounds and defends doctrines about God. But in a wider sense, especially on the continent of Europe, a theologian is a scholar who deals in any of the subject matter that clusters about theology proper — church history, Christian ethics, critical studies in the history, development and transmission of the Bible, even linguistic studies in Hebrew and Greek. Schweitzer's own speciality in his early years was the attempt to pierce through the tradition about Christ in order to discover the historical facts about the man Jesus. In the course of this investigation he came to views that pretty well threw liberal Protestantism into a panic. If Schweitzer's interpretation was correct, could a modern man be a follower of Jesus at all? We shall see.

What was this liberal Protestantism? First we had better glance at the sad story of orthodox Christianity. The New Testament contains materials to support several different interpretations of Jesus — that he was a man, the son of a carpenter, who taught love of God and men; that God certified him as His messenger by raising him from the dead; that he was a descendant of King David through his father Joseph; that on the contrary he was not the son of Joseph at all but was born of a virgin; that he was a Divine Being who voluntarily came to earth to atone for men's sins by his death; that he was God's agent in the creation of the world.

Under the obligation to believe everything in the Bible men struggled for several centuries to combine all this into one doctrine. How to picture Christ as both divine and human without giving him a double personality? How to make him a Divine Being without endangering monotheism? Earnest and pious men were exiled from their bishoprics as heretics. Bloody riots occurred in the streets over the question: Has Christ one nature or two?

At last, in the Formula of Chalcedon, 451, the official doctrine was established: Christ is one person having two natures; and under peril of damnation, you must not divide the person nor confuse the natures. All clear? It is doubtful whether anyone has ever succeeded in actually holding this doctrine, except verbally. Many a man who thinks himself orthodox falls into one or another of the ancient heresies — he is unconsciously an Apollinarian, or a Monophysite, or a Nestorian, or a Patripassian. Do these names mean nothing to you? Be glad. In any case, the net effect of all this arguing from a false premise was that the man Jesus was transformed into the god Christ.

Now then, at last, what about German liberal theology, which found echoes in other countries? There have always been escapists who in these labyrinths just loved the

Jesus of the parables and the Sermon on the Mount. Especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries arose the conviction that these incomprehensible complexities must be a *mythology*, that behind and within all these spider-webs must stand a real human figure. With considerable assurance, by the aid of a discriminating separation of the legendary and mythological from the credibly historical, men set about discovering the man Jesus. The new slogans were: "Back from St. Paul to Jesus" and "Not the religion *about* Jesus but the religion *of* Jesus". And how glad they were to discover that the real religion of Jesus turned out to be just what a nineteenth-century theologian was still able to believe, roughly the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man!

At this point, enter Albert Schweitzer, himself a product of this liberal theology. He told how in his room at Strasburg, while resisting the attempts of his landlady to clean up his room, he assembled from the university library, on tables and chairs and floor, all the "Lives" of Jesus of the previous hundred and fifty years. He discovered how each author had selected the elements of the picture to suit his own tastes. As many portrayals of "the real Jesus", as authors. All they had in common was the intent to find a Jesus whom modern men could believe in.

This, Schweitzer became convinced, was a mistake. The real Jesus was not a man of our time but of his own. So, in 1910, resulted his great book (English translation, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*). In constructing their varying pictures of the supposed historical Jesus, the liberal interpreters had laid aside just those parts of the traditions which Schweitzer believed to be most essential. When Jesus said: "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand," he meant just what any Jew of his time would understand, namely that the expected Divine intervention in history was imminent. The "Kingdom of God" was not a gradual social improvement, but God's miraculous ending of the present order, to set up a new order of things. All Jesus's ethical teachings were an "interim-ethic". Forgive your enemies because God will send the expected Messiah, perhaps next month. Lay not up treasures on earth because very soon there will be no earth as we know it.

But of course the cataclysm did not occur. Life on earth continued, with its good and evil. The teachings and the whole career of Jesus were based on a delusion. Some passages in the New Testament indicate that Jesus went to his death in a mood of despair. If all this was true (and Schweitzer argued very persuasively) there was an end, once for all, of any simple "following the teachings of Jesus". Paul Tillich has said that Schweitzer's view has since been corrected, but I may be permitted to doubt this. It sounds pretty reasonable to me.

Was Schweitzer then a Christian? Well, what is a Christian? Out of his picture of this deluded man of long ago, Schweitzer distilled one thing, the principle of love. Is that enough to make a Christian? Perhaps the question is not important. At gatherings of his medical staff, he used to read from Scripture and sing some of the fine, stately old German hymns. There seems to be a nostalgia here. One might say that he was a Christian sentimentally but not intellectually. It is not altogether clear whether, or in what sense, he retained belief in God.

(Concluded on page 364)

This Believing World

WHAT A hullabaloo the Christian advice by the Archbishop of Canterbury of using armed force in Rhodesia, if necessary, has caused, mainly among members of his Anglican flock. Yet, after all, it is thoroughly Christian advice as Dr. Ramsey stoutly and rightly maintains. Most people however, still think Jesus was the Prince of Peace, though in the clearest terms he insisted he was *not*. His exact words are "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I come not to send peace but a sword . . ." (Matt. 10, 34).

★

THE CHRISTIAN religion has always brought "a sword" into a discussion where necessary. History is packed with religious wars, and the Christians continued to hail Jesus as the Prince of Peace, while continuing their slaughter and carnage of opponents. There was, we repeat, nothing un-Christian in Dr. Ramsey's remarks. Whether one agrees with them politically is another matter.

★

NO ONE need be surprised to learn that the Church of England wants to change the present method of appointing bishops (*Daily Express*, 28/10/65). So far, bishops have been appointed by the Prime Minister who may well be—horrors of horrors!—an unbeliever. So one can understand why the Archbishops of Canterbury and York are in favour of dropping the present system and "beginning afresh." It will probably shock both when we say that the result will still be unsatisfactory. Either the bishop will believe implicitly in the Bible, as Dr. Ramsey does, or very little of it like the Bishop of Woolwich.

★

THE LORD Chamberlain has banned a Miracle play which was to be staged at Greenwich next Easter, because Jesus was to be shown wearing jeans. No doubt his usual long hair would pass any censor, but just think what would happen if "our Lord" were portrayed with a Beatle crop instead. Portraying Jesus on the stage at all comes very near blasphemy, but in jeans!

★

CHRISTIANITY is not the only religion that makes money. According to the *Weekend Telegraph* (15/10/65), which has a splendid article on the subject, the trade in all sorts of Voodoo merchandise runs up to £700,000 a year. Not bad when one considers the sales are of portable evil-eyes, religious pictures for magical ceremonies, Dume powder (Death unto my enemy), hexing pins to stick in wax effigies, and such like.

★

OF COURSE, all these things were the stock-in-trade of medieval Christianity, and they can now be bought in dozens of shops, mostly in the Harlem district of New York. In other words, even now, in 1965, the superstition of magic, evil spirits and curses, is still believed in by some (mostly coloured) Christians. But are white Christians much better? Astrology, omens, carrying a rabbit's foot, a nutmeg, or even a potato, to ward off disease or evil spirits, still have their adherents.

★

PAMELA SYKES, of Claverham, Bristol, informed readers of the *New Statesman* (22/10/65) that she was "collecting authentic, first-hand accounts of ghosts, seen, heard or sensed within the last 10 years". Miss Sykes wanted new, unpublished material. She can be sure of getting plenty.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PREDESTINATION

(Concluded from page 362)

explanation of the Doppler mentality. It is easy to believe that you are one of the elect when you have been brought up to behave in the manner of the "in-group" to which you belong. Every member of an "in-group" thinks he is superior to all members of an "out-group", at least in those particular respects which differentiate him from the others. In the case of the Doppler, he knows that he is capable of virtue and does practise it, for example by not playing cricket on Sunday. He sees around him the sinners who seem incapable of virtue and desecrate the Sabbath. These others must clearly be the vessels of wrath indicated by Paul. They are having a good time now, but ah, what of the life to come!

Contemplating the fate clearly in store for the sinners, the Doppler's self-satisfaction in his own virtue is enhanced.

NEGLECTED FACTS ABOUT

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

(Concluded from page 363)

One of his most charming and touching stories told how he came to his great principle, Reverence for Life. He got it, not from the birds and flowers, but from the hippopotamus! Riding up the river to visit a remote village, he found the little steamer surrounded by these ugly beasts, with their eyes and nostrils just emerging from the water; and so it suddenly came to him: "I am life that wants to live, in the midst of other life that wants to live." He was not fanatical about this. He would kill germs to save a human life, but would not needlessly tread on a line of ants. So now if a true believer asks: "What was the hippopotamus made for?" the answer is: "To instruct Albert Schweitzer."

All honour to him. But it is not orthodox Christianity that deserves the credit for his benevolence.

[Reprinted from *Progressive World*, September, 1965]

SECTARIAN BITTERNESS

"Disgraceful scenes marked the end of the Scottish League Cup Final at Hampden yesterday when 107,600 saw Celtic beat Rangers 2-1 . . . Hundreds of fans invaded the field at Hampden Park yesterday as Celtic players paraded with the Scottish League Cup. And the charge almost started off what could have been a blood-bath" (*Sunday Mail*, October 24th). Further trouble broke out on the boat taking supporters of both teams back to Belfast, and it had to return to pick up a detachment of police.

Unfortunate incidents have marred many football games recently but even when the jollity and sportsmanship prevailed elsewhere, the Celtic-Rangers encounter was an annual scandal. Nobody today bothers—or deems it prudent—to say why this event should always have been more acrimonious than similar contests. The answer is simple. Supporters tend to divide on religious, Catholic or Protestant, lines, and sectarian bitterness is the underlying motivation.

Against this deeply rooted feeling all the prior appeals for decency and calm proved in vain. Clearly, if a start is to be made in fostering harmony and goodwill among all sections of the population it must be among our children, before doctrinaire prejudices have been built up. Is such a start being made? Can it be made? Not while the Catholic Church demands its own day schools, brings pressure to bear on Catholic parents to send their children there, and presents most of the bill to the community to pay. Catholic and Protestant children grow up suspecting one another because they seldom if ever meet in a normal friendly way.

Our best insurance against the perpetuation of such "disgraceful scenes" is integration of all our children in community schools. But if special groups insist on antisocial isolation, at least let them pay for it. Let the community not endorse such policies, and squander money badly needed elsewhere, by subsidising them.

DAVID TRIBE,
President, National Secular Society.

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

London Branches—Kingston, Marble Arch, North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. J. W. BARKER, L. EBURY, J. A. MILLAR and C. E. WOOD. (Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY. Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others. Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY. Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (New Victoria Hotel, Corporation Street), Sunday, November 14th, 6.45 p.m.: GEORGE JONAS, "Some pressing problems of Criminal Reform". Glasgow Secular Society, (Central Hall, 25 Bath Street), Sunday, November 12th, 2.45 p.m.: ALEX STEWART, "Youth Confused". Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, November 14th, 6.30 p.m.: W. A. GAPE, "Obedience the Original Sin". South East London Technical College, Lewisham Way, London, S.E.3, Wednesday, November 17th, 1 p.m.: Debate, "There is no evidence for the existence of God". Speakers: DAVID TRIBE and a Christian. South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1.), Sunday, November 14th, 11 a.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM, "Secular Progress". November, 16th, 7.30 p.m.: LEONARD LEWIN, "The Myth and Reality of Freewill".

Notes and News

A REPORT by a committee of 22 Humanist and Christian educationalists calls for more "open" teaching of religion in schools, to encourage children to think for themselves and to undergo moral as well as traditional religious education. While not aiming to abolish RE, the report, *Religious and Moral Education*, questions the relevance of routine religious teaching and attempts at moral instruction, which are sometimes "vitiated by being so closely tied to religious education that at a later stage a rejection of religion may well leave the adolescent without any moral foundation". It makes different suggestions for different age groups. In primary schools, for instance, the emphasis should not be on hypothetical situations, but on the "clear challenge of example", if possible by the children's own master or mistress.

★

A MORE MATURE attitude can be adopted with secondary children under 13, whose questions should be answered honestly, even at the risk of shocking some of the children or their parents. For those between 13 and 16 an integrated course of religious and moral education is advocated, aimed at making the children think for themselves, not handing them a "purely school moral to be thrown off with the school uniform." Sixth formers could be given

an optional weekly period of open religious education as well as a compulsory course in which a wide variety of viewpoints would be examined. Morning prayers have become a pointless ritual, and the report suggests restricting them to two days a week. The committee includes Sir Gilbert Fleming, a former Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education, H. L. Elvin, Director of the London University Institute of Education, and Professor P. H. Hirst, Professor of Education at King's College, London.

★

WE CAN sympathise with the Archbishop of Canterbury. If he doesn't speak out on important issues like Rhodesia he is failing in his duty: if he does he is meddling in politics. Perhaps it was the unexpectedness of his statement to the British Council of Churches that shocked people more than its content. "If Rhodesia goes over the brink," Dr. Ramsey said, "I think that it is not for us as Christian Churches to give the Government military advice as to what is practicable or possible. That is not our function. But if the British Government thought it practicable to use force for the protection of the rights of the majority of the Rhodesian people, then I think that as Christians we have to say that it will be right to use force to that end." This was sufficient to bring protests from MPs like Quintin Hogg and Gilbert Longden, as well as a telegram from the prospective Conservative candidate, Sir Gerald Nabarro.

★

"AS ANGLICAN churchman," telegraphed Sir Gerald, "I deplore and deeply resent your translation pulpit to party politics and your condoning employment force against Ian Smith and his British patriots, white Rhodesians, who have come to our rescue in two world wars. Recommend you leave party politics to politicians to prevent recurrence your cardinal blunder advocating employment force and shooting down Britons in Rhodesia" (*The Guardian*, 29/10/65). No wonder Dr. Ramsey was "wounded" (*The Sunday Times*, 31/10/65). "I think I must improve my public relations," he said. ITV, who should know something about PR, gave the Archbishop a chance to amplify his remarks. He regretted "misrepresentation" of them, he said, "because I haven't advocated the use of force—good heavens, no." He was thinking purely in the circumstances of the British Government perhaps having to take over the government of Rhodesia and possibly having to use force to defend its legitimate authority. We doubt, however, if this would placate Sir Gerald Nabarro and Mr. Longden. But the Archbishop could "meddle" in politics as much as he liked, so long as he expressed the Tory viewpoint.

★

THE LETTER from David Tribe which we print opposite was also sent to the *Daily Telegraph*, where it received the attention of columnist Peter Simple. The traditional hooliganism at Celtic-Rangers matches in Glasgow does, Mr. Simple agreed (27/10/65), have its roots in religious differences. But he was not so sure about the National Secular Society's suggested remedy of ending separate Catholic day-school which build up "doctrinaire prejudices" in children. "Hooliganism without religion is not unknown at football matches in general," he pointed out. And, "Even if the spectators at Hampden Park became secularists to a man, they might still be unwilling to forgo an enjoyable and all-to-human afternoon of motiveless ritual hate." There is some truth in this, of course, Feelings run high at other local derbies (in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, etc.), but never quite so high as in Glasgow.

A Journal of the London Poor

By ELIZABETH COLLINS

A PARTICULARLY ATTRACTIVE edition in the World's Classics series is published by Oxford University Press (9s. 6d.), containing thirty representative sketches from Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* with an interesting biographical introduction by Professor John L. Bradley, who selected the material from the definitive edition published by Griffin, Bohn & Co., 1861-62. This introduction is worth reading for its own sake, giving as it does details of Mayhew's literary career, his restless curiosity and spirit of enquiry, his insight and humanity in his portrayal of lives of the lower working classes of London. His journalism, although of a casual nature, was activated by a profound concern for the human condition.

Mayhew might almost be described as the "Chaucer" of mid-Victorian England. Born in 1812, one of the seventeen children of a London lawyer, he was educated at Westminster School where, although brilliant, he was a somewhat indolent scholar. Caught studying a Greek grammar instead of his prayer-book during an Abbey service, and due for punishment in consequence, he simply collected his books and left the school for good. Thereafter he tried his hand at many things, the sea, the law, always appearing irresponsible and ill-disciplined, until finally he turned his attention to popular journalism. This, and writing plays for the low dramatic demands of the age, suited him well, and he became a prolific writer. In 1831 Mayhew, together with his friend Gilbert A'Beckett, began to publish the journal *Figaro in London* which ran from 1831-39. The period was one of scurrilous satire, but it was said of Mayhew's editorship that he was the first to prove that "satire in journalism could be conducted without personalities and need not sneer at morality". *Figaro* was unique among the journals of that time in not surrendering to popular tastes.

Mayhew was also one of the originators of *Punch* (1841), and for a short time joint editor of that journal with Mark Lemon. That experience may have inclined him towards philanthropic journalism taking the poor of London as its theme, for *Punch* began as a radical and democratic champion of the poor and oppressed masses of the "Hungry Forties", and although plentifully interspersed with humour, its pages were imbued with social zeal. The most significant event in Mayhew's career was when he prevailed upon the proprietors of the *Morning Chronicle* to publish a series of statistical and anecdotal articles in order to expose the gross inequalities of the social system, and to provide a detailed description of the "moral, intellectual, material, and physical condition of the industrial poor". It was a matured Mayhew who embarked upon this project, and the first of the articles appeared on September 24th, 1849, and ran until October, 1850 — seventy-six articles of some 3,500 words each, dealing with exploitation and poverty. Interrupted by a dispute with the newspaper following his attack upon a West End tailoring establishment employing sweated labour, and believing that his journalistic freedom was being threatened, Mayhew ceased to write for the paper. Instead, he continued the articles as *London Labour*, serialised in weekly and monthly parts until legal action in 1852 again suspended publication.

Subsequently, however, the whole work was completed, and in 1861-62 Messrs. Griffin, Bohn & Co. published in

four volumes Mayhew's extensive studies entitled *London Labour and the London Poor*. The author himself made three important assertions concerning this work : —

- (1) That it was the "first attempt to publish the history of a people from the lips of the people themselves, giving a literal description of their labour, their earnings, their trials and their sufferings, in their own unvarnished language."
- (2) "The first commission of inquiry into the state of the people undertaken by a private individual, and the first 'blue book' ever published in twopenny numbers."
- (3) He visualised his work as "supplying information concerning a large body of persons of whom the public has less knowledge than of the most distant tribes of the earth."

The public took the book quite seriously and it excited comment from all over the kingdom. Provincial newspapers had made a practice of quoting excerpts from Mayhew's articles during their publication in the *Chronicle*, and the response was considerable. So much so that the newspaper had to allocate office room to deal with the donations that poured in for the alleviation of distressed cases. It was this fund that Mayhew was empowered to call upon when the occasion warranted it for those in dire need.

It was evident that Mayhew's book profoundly influenced sociologists and certain novelists of the mid-century, particularly Charles Kingsley in *Alton Locke*, Ewing Ritchie in *Night Side of London* (1857), James Greenwood in *Seven Curses of London* (1869), all covering similar ground. Of the many pamphlets, books, and articles of the time, however, none are recorded with the humanity of Henry Mayhew. His interviewing was unorthodox, and his charm, his kindly understanding manner, instantly established contact between his subject and himself. Added to which was his sympathy, good sense, and compassion for the "human lot" untouched by sentimentality.

These thirty sketches give a moving picture of the London of a century ago, an instructive and appalling account of life as lived by the poor amid the wealth and prosperity of the 1850s onwards. Yet at the same time it is a picture of human courage, independence, and dignity in poverty, with the high spirits of the Londoners continually breaking through depressing surroundings. Of particular interest are descriptions of the street markets, the scavengers, the crossing-sweepers, ham-sandwich men, flower-girls, life in low lodging houses, and the charming sketches of peep-shows, and the "Fanticcini Man" with his marionettes. Mayhew depicts them all, and they come to life in his pages. Throughout his articles he urged a closer relationship between worker and management, and a proper recognition of the former's abilities.

That conditions such as Mayhew described so vividly could persist in a state so ostensibly pious as 19th-century England is indeed a black mark against the Christianity of the Victorians, with their Churchgoing, and a Bench of Bishops in the Lords. Mayhew's sketches were a much needed criticism of such complacency, though only now is the great humanitarian writer being evaluated at his true worth, and belatedly receiving the recognition he deserves. His latter years were marked by a struggle to support himself by casual journalistic work without much

success, and ultimately he withdrew from the literary scene. He died at Charlotte Street, Bloomsbury, in 1887, aged 75 years.

It may well be said of Henry Mayhew by future historians that he was the real architect of the present Welfare State, which though imperfect in some respects is infinitely preferable to the unctuous complacency and patronising attitude of the 19th century. As an invaluable social document, as well as for some of the delightful sketches it contains, this is well worth reading.

Points From New Books

By OSWELL BLAKESTON

THE MYTH-MAKERS have had, and are having, a grand time with Dylan Thomas. Their legends illustrate the ease with which one may write a gospel which is full of inaccuracies. The most salutary lessons are to be learnt by those who do not wish to be bamboozled, for future literary historians will surely take many of these books, when it has become impossible to check the statements, and use them as source material. Myth will have become fact.

Constantine Fitzgibbon, in his *The Life of Dylan Thomas* (Dent, 42s.), has gone to a lot of patient trouble to correct a number of wishful fantasies which are well on the way to becoming "established". He has probably done as much as one man can without devoting a lifetime to one book. Yet there is at least one assumption about a permanent attitude which is misleading, and an occasional second-hand report of an incident is untrue. I dare to say this because Dylan for a time stayed with me in — of all places — Wimbledon; and although Dylan — the "instant Dylan" — would change his tune to suit an audience, I know I can fault at least one blanket assertion about his character. Again, as I was present when certain recorded incidents occurred, I can say, from first-hand knowledge, that second-hand witnesses are often no more reliable than the chroniclers of miracles.

Indeed, Mr. Fitzgibbon is not unaware of the difficulties, although he has not been able to avoid some of the traps; and he quotes an early biographer of Goethe who blandly wrote: "Goethe told Eckermann that of all his mistresses it was Lili whom he had loved the most. Here Goethe was wrong."

Now, since his death, people have tried to prove almost anything about Dylan Thomas and in spite of the poet's own utterances; and there has been a thesis written to show that Dylan Thomas's poetry was essentially "religious." Mr. Fitzgibbon takes a far more balanced view. He remarks that the use of biblical and Christian imagery prove no more the poet's Christianity than his use of astronomical imagery indicates that he was an astrologer or his repeated references to birds confirm him as an ornithologist. "If he was a religious poet, his was a religion that excludes morality, dogma, even sureness of belief. This does not leave much behind . . ." The position could hardly be put more succinctly.

There is a letter in which Dylan wrote: ". . . God is not the lukewarm soup and starch of the chapels, but the red hot grains of love and life distributed equally and impartially among us all, and that in the roots of our being lies not the greed for property and money, but the desire, large as the universe, to express ourselves freely and to the utmost limits of our individual capabilities." One might claim this as a statement made by a free-thinker.

I remember Dylan telling me, in a relaxed moment, that he was compiling a list of words which young poets should not use; and the first word on the list was — God. Then there was Dylan writing to Trevor Hughes saying that Christ was always "the superior, the natty gent in the tramps' ward". Or Dylan specifically telling John Malcolm Brinnin that his last major poems are "poems in praise of God's world by a man who doesn't believe in God". His biographer notes, too, that only once in his adult life the poet entered a church to take part in a religious service; and that when, for some family reason which may never be quite clear to us, he allowed his three children to be baptised.

Mr. Fitzgibbon reminds us that Dylan's father was a sort of God-hater if not a fully fledged atheist. He repeats the delightful story, which one has read elsewhere, of Dylan's father looking out of a window on a rainy day and exclaiming angrily: "It's raining, blast Him!" One thinks of Dylan talking about "the eternal damnation of the Almighty". One recalls that Richard Church refused to publish Dylan's first book of short stories because he feared prosecution for blasphemy.

But *The Life of Dylan Thomas* is certainly a mine of glorious stories about the poet's background and the poet's life. One can see again the gargoyle wink above the dangling cigarette when Dylan says: "It's lovely when you burn your boats — they burn so beautifully." Or Dylan saying that he had not been able to sleep all night because those bloody dwarfs were "crushing up the mice again".

Then Mr. Fitzgibbon is very perceptive about the poems as poems, about words being used as vials for new meaning to be poured into them, and then the progress from "doing magnificent things with words" to doing "magnificent things with poems". Dylan was not always the comic turn that he gave in a pub, but a hard-working craftsman with "an infinite capacity for aching pains". And Mr. Fitzgibbon brings dignity and restraint to his description of the last tragic days when the performer had taken over from the poet.

This book, some four hundred readable pages, is called a definitive biography; but now, I suppose, we will have a spate of books with such titles as *What Constantine Fitzgibbon Left Out*. Someone will surely want to talk about Emily Holmes-Coleman, Max Chapman, Humphrey Searle, and a host of others who are definitely "part of the story" but do not appear in the 400 pages.

Dylan was against people who pop poems "into critical killing bottles", so it is a pleasure to give a simple welcome to a first book by a new young poet, Nicholas Snowden Willey, *The Green Tunnel*. It is published by Signals, the most rewarding of the avant-garde art galleries in London; and it sells at 15s. in hard covers and with a luxurious wealth of white margin and a striking cover illustration by Takis. Here is a poem quoted in full:

I think, therefore I think;
What of the stars that spin?
What does Autumn begin
When it begins to rain?
I am, for there I am.

[Editor's Note: Oswald Blakeston's own new book of poems appears on November 15th with the Trigram Press, *How To Make Your Own Confetti*. It is being published in a paper-back edition at 10s. 6d. and in a hard-cover edition at 18s. The illustrations, called "illusions", are by Max Chapman.]

CORRESPONDENCE

INDICTING THE PAPISTS

Mr. F. H. A. Micklewright's indictment of Papists (22/10/65) is regrettably weakened by the absurd and loathsome chauvinism of his final paragraph. Further, his former Anglicanism (with its ridiculous notion of "my country right or wrong" with which it is permeated) betrays itself. Thus he uses the term "disloyalty" in reference to citizens of another state, Ireland. As "disloyal" one supposes as Cypriots or Adenis. To what? The Crown?

He is led to use licence in describing the country (dear Anglia or Britain?) as "flooded with priests, monks and nuns." In an estimated 1965 population of 53,702,000 for these Isles there are 9,500 priests and monks (*Catholic Directory*, 1965), no figure for nuns but liberally assume 2,500. Twelve thousand priests, monks and nuns in a population of nearly fifty-four million cannot be described as "flooding the country." On this assumption of 2,500 nuns there is only one priest, monk or nun for every 425 nominal Catholics in England, Scotland and Wales. Hence the anxious cries by the hierarchy for "vocations."

Agreed "they claim prerogatives out of all proportion to their real numbers"—and here incidentally Mr. Micklewright refutes his wild assertion induced by Anglomania. But let us get things into rational perspective in presenting indictments. Freethinkers should not be inhibited by pathetic puerile patriotism but should rather be motivated by the clarity of outlook induced by cosmopolitan freethought.

B. J. CLIFTON

THE EPICUREAN

"Hellenist"? OED = Greek Scholar. (I can't find "Womanist" anywhere). Mr. Smith is wrong. I'm not anti-men. I'm anti-feminist, especially those who dare to call themselves "rationalist." There may not have been many women philosophers, but nor, thank goodness, have there been many women theologians. May I suggest that Mr. Smith reads *What Humanism is About* by the non-philosopher, Kit Mouat-ism? (The Rationalist Press has copies.) Commercial over, but thanks for the opportunity.

KIT MOUAT *the Epicurean*

THE MAN JESUS

Mr. E. Markley's letter (22/10/65) on the Myth and Man saga surely takes the cake. He gives us his Mark 6. 3. "Is this not the carpenter Son of Mary," etc., as evidence. Now all we have to deal with is the problem of Mary, sons and all. Further, "the overthrow of the money changers in the temple is too realistic and in keeping with the general character of Jesus" to be a solar myth.

I suggest he tries Mark 14. 21 for a character reference. "Good were it for that man (Judas) if he had never been born." Love thy neighbour indeed! Maybe a little too realistic for Mr. Markley.

As regards the memories of our predecessors being as good as ours (Mr. Markley's words) there must have been an outbreak of amnesia during the "Messiah's" early years. Mark can't even remember where he was born or the Sermon on the Mount, although he seems to be remarkably lucid on his baptism by that other "historical" character John the Baptist, just up from the wilderness in a camel hair coat, munching locusts and wild honey! Strange food? If anyone had any doubt as to the Baptist's identity I suggest he consult a doctor. About all John ever did or still does for that matter, is to pour water from his pitcher. How he lost his head is another tale. Personally, I thought the Rev. Robert Taylor demolished the whole astronomical fabrication a hundred and fifty years ago.

Another typical blunder from Mr. Markley: "One seldom hears arguments about Apollo or Jupiter," he says. Do we have to put up with this in THE FREETHINKER? One seldom hears sermons about them either at least not in their old names. They've been using a new one for the last 1,700 years—Jesus Christ.

F. A. MELVIN

SOURCE WANTED

I received my September 24th, FREETHINKER and read George R. Goodman's splendid article "Their Faith is Vain." I keenly regret that he did not give the reference source of Pope Leo X's statement, "What profit hath not that fable of Christ brought us."

I have for several years sought the original source ever since I read it in Joseph McCabe's book *The Futility of Basic Religious Beliefs*, Chapter 10. McCabe did not give the reference either. If you can refer me to the source or where I can purchase the book in which it appeared, I will have tracts printed with the proper reference to the source and have fun distributing them. McCabe stated that it was at a party at Rome where the Pope Leo remarked

genially to some of his friends on the profit that fable of Jesus Christ had brought them.

B. L. GALLOWAY (Utah)

THE TYRINGHAM TRUST

Recent weeks have seen the emergence of the Tyringham Trust, which is being set up to look into the possibility of establishing the first non-profit making in-patient naturopathic clinic in the country. The first three trustees are Mr. S. Rose-Neil, D.O., M.B.N.O., F.A.C.A., a business-man and a City chartered accountant. The trustees are working in close collaboration with a committee who include social workers, a psychologist, business people and a journalist.

The clinic under the Directorship of Mr. S. Rose-Neil, will fill a need that already exists in the Naturopathic movement for such a clinic—to offer comprehensive naturopathic treatment to people in all income groups, training facilities for students, the means for scientifically designed experiments, research into the efficacy of naturopathic methods and the compilation of statistical data for the furtherance of knowledge.

The scope of the clinic would be as extensive as possible. Treatments available would include fasting and diet, postural and remedial exercises, psychological treatment, hydrotherapy (including Sauna baths), acupuncture, osteopathic, chiropractic and other manipulative methods, homeopathic and herbal medication, sun and air bathing, and ultra-sonic, faradic and other electrical methods. There would be swimming, tennis, table tennis, gardening and walking together with many other activities for recreation.

The property for the clinic has already been chosen—a beautiful country mansion within easy reach of London and the Midlands, set in acres of woodlands and particularly lovely gardens. It is hoped that with the help of public money and private donations, the property could be purchased by the Trust, converted and equipped, and opened to patients during 1966.

The Secretary would be glad to hear from anyone who can offer help in this exciting project, either financial or otherwise, and those who are interested should contact:

The Secretary, The Tyringham Trust,
2, Harrowby Court, Seymour Place, London, W.1.

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The Freethinker

Volume LXXXV—No. 47

Founded 1881 by G. W. Foote

HAVE spent a certain amount of time perusing *The New Reformation*, a recent effusion from the well-publicised pen of Dr. John Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich, better known as the author of that best-seller of ecclesiastical fiction, *Honest to God*. To review a book of this nature, at any rate in any precise sense, constitutes an impossible task, since the "Wool" in Woolwich seems to be the operative syllable which has communicated itself to the episcopal style of writing. What, however, does emerge from this recent successor to *Honest to God*, is that the Reformation which began with Luther and Calvin, is nowadays a spent force. A few, and presumably more radical and comprehensive "Reformation" (more honest-to-God—and man) is recently required for the visibly tottering creed of Christianity.

To wade in detail through Dr. Robinson's diffuse incubations would scarcely be edifying either to writer or reader; but the subject initially broached by our modernist Bishop is both topical and important. Is a new reformation of Christianity even possible in this year of grace 1965, at least in any concrete sense similar to that launched by Luther during the first half of the 16th century? This subject can, of course, be treated under several heads, but I propose here to deal with it primarily from the standpoint of Christian theology, particularly since the primary problem for Christianity today is the merely basic problem of credibility. Is Christianity true? Unless that can be established, every other species of reforming activity is clearly superfluous.

Old and New Reformations

Since Dr. Robinson uses the term Reformation (with capital R), I also shall use it in the same sense that he does. By the term, I imply those movements which have appeared from time to time during the 19 centuries—ongoing evolution of Christianity with the avowed and specifically defined objective of reforming Christianity from within. Of these successive movements of reform, by far the best-known as well as the most influential, was the Protestant Reformation of the 16th and succeeding centuries, to which, indeed, the definitive term "The Reformation," is often attached. (Cf. Archibald Robertson's *The Reformation*—a *must* for Humanists—as lucid as the Bishop is the reverse).

What in actuality was this Reformation? What did it try to reform? How far again in actuality did it succeed? Did Luther, Calvin *et al* succeed in creating a new type of Christianity, and what were the historic conditions under which they did it? Lastly, and most important of all from our (and Dr. Robinson's) point of view, assuming—as he does—that the Protestant Reformation of the 20th century is now definitely unequal to the fundamental task of giving us a viable Christianity (today) is it nowadays possible for any current or future reformation to do so?

Historically speaking, the European Reformation of the 16th century did not of course set out with any intention of abolishing traditional Christianity but merely of reforming it: hence its name. This Reformation had several aspects, both practical and ideological. The attack upon indulgences, with which the initial German Reformation started, combined both practical and theological objectives. The Protestant reformers found themselves faced with a huge dogmatic structure initiated in the early Christian centuries by the Church fathers (of whom St. Augustine of Hippo was the most important) and later given an Aristotelian philosophical foundation and a formal logical

content by the medieval schoolmen (of whom St. Thomas was outstanding).

Christian Perspectives

As and when considered as a theological movement, the Protestant reformers did not set out to abolish this theology altogether, but to revise it with reference both to biblical scriptures and to modern (i.e. 16th century) secular knowledge; and the final result was not the abolition of Christianity or even entirely of its traditional forms. For example, Luther accepted the dogma of the Trinity (though he admitted that the term itself was unscriptural), whilst Calvin interpreted St. Augustine's predestinarian views more rigidly than any Catholic schoolman had ever done. The upshot was a new Christian theology, identical in some points with the old, but reformed, and on some points (such as transubstantiation) abolished.

This new reformed Christianity proved sufficiently viable to last for several centuries, say from the publication of Calvin's *Institutes* in 1536, down to that of *Honest to God* by Bishop Robinson in 1963. Actually, as I have tried to demonstrate in *The Crisis of Christianity* (due for publication early next year) Dr. Robinson's Christian atheism really dates back to Calvin & Co., since *lex orandi lex credendi* (we believe in the one to whom we pray). But how is it possible to pray to a God (like Calvin's) who has already predestined everything?

The Reformation was successful in the sense that it did actually create a form of Christianity viable for several centuries in Europe and (as I recently showed here) still apparently so in a backward former Catholic area like South America. But why was this so and could it again be so with regard to a new Reformation such as Dr. Robinson now advocates occurring under contemporary conditions? I suggest that current intellectual perspectives make any such viable reformation of Christianity in the 20th century impossible. The reason why it was possible to reform Christianity in the 16th century, lay in the fact that the cosmic and historical perspectives of Protestant Reformers were essentially the same as those of their Catholic predecessors. Augustine, Aquinas and Calvin believed in a geocentric universe closed both in time and in space. Neither Catholic fathers nor medieval schoolmen knew anything about either modern science

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The New Reformation

By F. A. RIDLEY

or modern historiography: Copernican astronomy, Darwinian biology, Einsteinian relativity were *terra incognita* to both medieval Catholicism and to the Protestant Reformers. Nor was either species of Christianity any better informed with regard to human history or to comparative religion, or even to the actual circumstances under which their own religion had originated.

It was this basic identity of outlook between medieval Catholicism and the Protestant Reformers which alone made possible any viable reformation of Christianity. But obviously no such identity exists today. The pre-scientific world common to both the original founders and to the later reformers of Christianity is now in process of disappearing; and its elementary postulates which

are those of traditional Christianity both Catholic and Protestant, become even more meaningless.

The Bishop's analogy between old and new Reformations is therefore irrelevant. There can, and will be, no future or viable Reformation of Christianity in any way analogous with the 16th century one.

Charles Bradlaugh made the notable observation that "No one ever saw a religion die." In the literal sense of the *rigor mortis*, this remark will, no doubt, stand. But the dying symptoms of religions are often visible to the percipient onlooker. They were so of Roman Paganism (as its Christian successors noted with obvious glee!) and they are so of Christianity today from, say, Woolwich to the Vatican.

Are We Really Freethinkers?

By F. H. SNOW

SCEPTICS find frequent cause for accusing Christians of unfaithfulness to their ideals. As believers in the precepts of their exemplary Jesus, Christians are open to condemnation if, mainly, their conduct fails to stand up to their professions. My experience among them, in the days when I aspired to *post mortem* bliss, was that whilst there were few who gave evidence of living close to Christ's precepts, there were many who thought they did, although frequently behaving in unchristianlike fashion. They were hardly hypocrites, seeming unaware of their deviations from the letter and spirit of their Blessed Master's ordinances. They appeared incapable of identifying in themselves the sins they deplored in others, particularly those of malice, prejudice and uncharitableness.

I have had reason to wonder whether an analogous situation exists with regard to sceptics. Are we who very rightly objugate the failings of the upholders of religious virtues, true to our own rationalist principles? Do we consistently subject ourselves to the discipline of that reason which we hold up to the religious as justifying our repudiation of their creeds, and to our fellow-men in general as essential to a right appraisal of the motives, morals and problems of individuals and nations? Are we the freethinkers which, without fear of contradiction, I assert that all sceptics would vigorously resent being told they weren't? Or are we no more than critics of those whose prejudices stamp them as adversaries of freethought, or who we, mainly because of uncensored animus, wrongly place in that category?

Some conversations with a long-standing worker for the cause of freethought, persuaded me that he was not a freethinker, by reason of his fixed hates of certain peoples and vituperative denigration of parties and policies with which he disagreed, instead of scrupulous consideration of all their aspects. He appeared to have decided against them with the inflexible certitude of the faith-ridden religionist, and to be quite unable to gauge them with the logic he applied to systems of thought of which he approved. Any German, to him, was thoroughly bad, and would emulate with gusto the Belsen atrocities; Russians were little better, having murdered their royal family; the Chinese, except the Formosans, were hardly more than savages, blacks fit only to serve, trade-unionists were traitorous agitators.

Many logical objections to such wholesale condemnations would occur to those who think freely. It needs no outstanding intellect to realise that one should bear in mind, as far as possible, every factor relevant to a subject on which one forms an opinion. By so doing, one goes far towards ensuring just judgment. I can't imagine how any-

one worthy of the name of freethinker can lose sight of this.

Of course, a very large proportion of those who are outside the sceptical category show little independence of thought, save in the small matters of everyday life. The replies of some persons to a street interviewer's question: "What do you think of Sir Winston Churchill?", shortly after that grand old statesman's death, instanced this, and prompted me to write a letter (which remained unpublished) to certain newspapers, rebutting the expressed belief of those TV "extras" that, but for Churchill, they wouldn't have been alive. I pointed out the senselessness of that belief, on the grounds (1) that it assumed the wholesale assassination of Britishers, had Hitler triumphed—a belief which neither Sir Winston nor any other statesman had voiced, as they surely would have, had they held it, and (2) because it implied that, under the leadership of any of the statesman who stood with Churchill against the Nazi aggressor, the spirit on which we British pride ourselves would have wilted.

That Churchill's brave words inspired our people is undoubtedly true. That the words of no other leader could have similarly inspired them, is not. But words, however eloquent, do not win wars, as shown when the Germans swept through the French, in spite of Weygand's "They shall not pass!", and, for all my admiration of Churchill's part in our victory, I could not, as a freethinker, subscribe to the bald claim that without his leadership we would not have survived.

Likewise, such claims as that all Germans are Belsen-minded, outrage reason. That Russians are potential assassins because their predecessors of fifty years ago killed their royal family, is equally absurd, abhorrent as is that deed. Have not royal heads been lopped off in England, and much blue blood spilled by France's dreadful guillotine? We do not regard ourselves or the French as bloodthirsty wretches because of the atrocious deeds of long-dead forefathers. It was my atheist friend's unwillingness or inability to consider the objects and subjects of his antipathy from any amelioratory angle, that prompted this article. The stark fact impressed itself upon me that it was possible for persons to regard themselves as freethinkers for most of a lifetime and work zealously for the "Best of Causes", but be merely sceptics.

Surely the basic freethought principle is readiness to review, at all times, the most emphatic of conclusions. However confident a freethinker may be that nothing can shake his views, he is false to his label the moment he sub-

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Atheism

By CHAPMAN COHEN

N ATHEIST is one who does not believe in God. I accept that definition on the condition that we take "god" as meaning some-thing, and not a word that may mean anything, and finishes up by meaning no-thing. And a good reason for insisting that "god" shall stand for a definite something is that the only opposite to some-thing is nothing, and every belief must have something on which to rest, even though it may be nothing more or better than delusion. In the era of human development that gave rise to the gods they were to their unconscious creators the most obvious, the most solid of facts. So when the theist says I do not believe in gods — which if it means anything involves the further statement, "I do not believe in gods exist" — he is using "god" in the only sense in which the term is intelligible. Either we are talking of what the world has known as gods, or we are uttering mere gibberish. To be intelligible a thing must be definable; not completely definable, but definable so far as it is understood. If when we use the term "God" we do not mean what the world has always understood as God, what, in the name of all that is sensible, do we mean? The plain truth is that "God" is nowadays not an explanation, it is narcotic.

It lies heavily in favour of Atheism that while Atheism can fully explain Theism, Theism fails altogether to explain atheism. Every authoritative modern work on the history of man is agreed that the idea of God came into existence as a consequence of the personification of natural forces. Whatever may be the divergencies among theories dealing with the evolution of the God-idea, there is general and complete agreement on this. The religious theory is that God made man in his own image. The substance of all scientific theorising is that gods are made in the image of man. Even those who refrain from calling themselves theists, or even Agnostics, and who resort to the device of placing a mathematical formula before the world as a substitute for "God", unconsciously bear testimony to the same end. Let anyone try to think of praying on any unthinkable subject or purpose to a mathematical formula and he will realise at once the absurdity of professing belief in a God such as that which current Theism gives us. The savage was wrong in his conclusions, but he was not so completely absurd as to substitute for the god who did something, who listened to his prayers, who granted favours or inflicted punishment, a mere symbol, a something without form or feature. The savage felt himself surrounded by gods, and had everything to gain by pleasing them. The modern man finds himself part of a society where a workable acquaintance with science is possible to all. He has not discovered gods, he has inherited them. They form no necessary part of his working world. Their existence is as significant to the scientific student as is the presence of rudimentary ear muscles or the remains of a second stomach in man.

Shelley was expelled from Oxford University for publishing a pamphlet bearing the title *The Necessity of Atheism*. There was genius in the title, but there was also in it the summary of a lengthy process, the general attitude of which is now well understood. We have to think of man developing in a world of which he knows little and understands less. In more than one way, through the misunderstanding of internal states and the misreading of the nature of external events, man pictures a world that

is full of mysterious "spiritual" forces with his own well-being completely dependent upon his gaining their favour and goodwill. Picture man, then, as Miss Florence Kingsley describes him in her experience of the primitive West African: —

Everything happens by the action of spirits. The thing he does is done by the spirit within acting on his body, the matter with which that spirit is associated. Everything that is done by other things is done by their spirits . . . The native will point out to you a lightning stricken tree and tell you its spirit has been killed. He will tell you when an earthen cooking pot is broken it has lost its spirit. If his weapon failed him it is because he has made its spirit sick by means of other spirits of the same class. In every action of life he lives with a great spirit world around him.

It is from this crude material that the gods are formed; in this kind of environment they are born. The history of the gods begins in a world in which the "supernatural" is all-powerful, with man cowering before the creatures of his own imagination. It is a history of a transition from a world in which the gods are everywhere and do everything to one in which the gods are being rapidly evaporated into nothing. The radical difference here, the nature of a revolution before which political and social revolutions are mere incidents in the life of humanity, is that man begins by interpreting the world in terms of his own fears and feelings. He ends by explaining himself in terms of environmental forces, material biological and mental. It is human weakness and ignorance that gives the gods birth, it is inherited superstition that causes them to persist throughout the ages, becoming weaker and weaker as man's intelligence moves from discovery to discovery, from fear to understanding, until in the language of Heine, science brings "the last sacrament to a dying god".

There is, it must be noted, no growth in the idea of God. There is only progressive deterioration. The gods grow fewer as the human mind approaches maturity. Let us also note another significant feature. The majority of men and women do not reason themselves out of Theism. Mostly they outgrow it. The gods die from the sheer pressure of human experience. The logic of fact ultimately overthrows the logic of theory. It was environmental forces that brought the gods into existence. It is environmental forces that deals them the death blow.

I repeat here what I have said elsewhere. From the age of fetishism the history of the idea of God has been a history of continuous modifications and rejections. Scarce an invention that has not slain a god, scarce a discovery that has not marked the grave of a discarded deity. Criticism reduced the number of the gods; knowledge limited their power. A refinement of feeling and a deepening of understanding killed doctrine after doctrine upon which the rule of the gods rested. Auguste Comte was right when he called fetishism the creative age of theology. It was, for once the gods are created they are full-born. They have no childhood, youth, maturity or old age. They are either here or they are not; the difference of character ascribed them are mere reflections of human development. The gods come and go, and no one regrets their passing save those who have not yet outgrown them. They leave behind them not a trace of any single good they have conferred upon humanity. Man endowed the gods with his own vices, but also with his own virtues, and as he grew ashamed of the faults in his own character

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This Believing World

CHRISTIANS WERE divided in their reaction to the Archbishop of Canterbury's statement on Rhodesia. Many of them objected to the idea of using force against our white brethren in Rhodesia if not against Africans. But he was stoutly supported by a Roman Catholic (*Daily Mail*, 30/10/65) who expressed, on behalf of Catholics of "every political persuasion and none," unstinted admiration for the Archbishop's "courage and clear vision." Jesus the "Prince of Peace" proves noticeably inadequate in such crises as the Rhodesian.

★

THE *Daily Sketch* (1/11/65) faced what it called the "brutal facts" on mixed marriages. These are not marriages of people of different colour or race, they are marriages of different religions. And it is a "brutal fact that marriages between people of different religions are often unhappy. In the past, religious wars were easily the most bestial of all wars. This should give a pointer to people of different religions who want to marry.

★

THE DEATH of Jesus still forms the subject of innumerable theological works, and appears to retain its popularity. Two books on it are reviewed by *The Observer* (31/10/65)—*Why Was He Killed?* by Guy Schofield, and *The Passover Plot* by Hugh J. Schonfield. Both are "speculative," being based, as they must be, on the four Gospels. Hundreds of more or less similar speculations have been published, everything being based on "Holy Writ"; but it is quite intriguing to see how few of the "speculations" deal with the solemn statements of Irenaeus who, writing in the year 180 AD, declared that Jesus died *not* as the Gospels say, but as "an old man."

★

IF JESUS was an old man when he died, then the accounts in the Gospels must be false. In any case, the reviewer, Dr. James Parkes, a convinced Christian, is not convinced by either Mr. Schofield or Dr. Schonfield. Of the latter, he says, "The author fails to convince because his Jesus is doubly un-Jewish, first in a slavish and mechanical attitude to the Scriptures, secondly on an unscrupulous manipulation of men and women which neither Law nor Prophet would approve." We like the words "unscrupulous manipulation."

★

AN ARTICLE on "the world of spirits" by Hilda Martin in the *Lewisham Journal* (1/10/65) gives us the usual picture of a "spirit guide"—that is an American Indian, complete with feathers, guaranteed as genuine by the inevitable old lady of 78, a Mrs. Johnson. It is just as authentic as are the numerous other portraits of Indian spirit guides who cluster our Spiritualistic journals. Mrs. Johnson found she was "psychic" at the age of ten; seeing spirits and hearing them speak "clair-audently."

★

WE SUSPECT that lots and lots of people will be "converted" by this kind of twaddle, which has an irresistible attraction for some country newspapers and feminine writers. But why should we be surprised? The various sects of Christianity have produced chapels, churches, and worshippers galore on the basis of similar twaddle. Not to mention the peculiar beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and Christian Scientists.

ARE WE REALLY FREETHINKERS?

(Concluded from page 370)

ordinates reason to rhetoric. As an atheist, I have no fear that reason would fail to dispose of any argument against my conviction that there is no God. As a freethinker, I must not let that conviction ossify into prejudice, and must be ever willing to accord protagonists of God the amplest facilities to upset it. That is, of course the attitude of any atheist worthy of the name.

To deserve the title of freethinker, it is incumbent on atheists, rationalists, humanists, to preserve a similar attitude in the secular field, abhor instinctive and political biases, die-hard rages and *a priori* condemnations, and weigh every line of thought in honest effort to justify the problems and policies of their fellow men.

ATHEISM

(Concluded from page 371)

the change was reflected in the bettering of the character of his gods. Today the gods do nothing. They are nothing.

Shelley's phrase, "the necessity of atheism", is fully justified by a survey of human history. It is more than justified for history leads to a generalisation of greater authority and stronger emphasis. The revision of the statement should read "the inevitability of atheism". Atheism is an explicit statement in words of what has always been implicit in practice. Atheism admits the fictional reality of the gods as it admits the fictional reality of good and evil spirits, of witches, fairies and demons. It takes the god-idea, traces its history, describes its origin, and registers its decay and death. Atheism is thus the final stage of a lengthy historic process. Atheism is more than necessary, it is inevitable.

WITHOUT COMMENT

THE VATICAN Council approved by 2,031 votes to 193 the first part of the amended document on "religious liberty." This part stresses that all men must recognise the Roman Catholic Church as the true church.—*Daily Telegraph* (27/10/65).

OBSOLETE LEGISLATION

The police superintendents of this country were quite right to point out the nuisance and dangers of obsolete legislation.

They have quite enough to do enforcing laws which everyone accepts as socially necessary without the problem of deciding whether or not to prosecute infringement of statutes inspired by another era. Scientific knowledge and social conditions change over the years, and with them codes of acceptable conduct. Unfortunately the Statute Book does not always keep up with these changes.

Much social legislation still in force dates from a time when people were fined for not going to church and believed in witchcraft and demon possession. Other laws arose in the sanctimonious atmosphere of Victorian narrowness. Many of these statutes have never been repealed. So we have legislation relating to blasphemy, Sunday observance, male homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia and divorce. Quite modern legislation relating to adoption, education, family planning and censorship is based on ancient assumptions, for example, that everyone is or ought to be religious and concerned to uphold religion and the social teaching of the Churches.

Many of these laws are unenforced because they are unenforceable. Others are so out of tune with the spirit of our times that we do not expect our police to prosecute under them, though we are too cowardly or hypocritical to have them repealed. And so they go on, in force but ignored, bringing the whole body of law into disrepute.

Let Parliament help the police by throwing out all laws not worth their keep.

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DAVID TRIBE,
President, National Secular Society.

THE FREETHINKER

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

London Branches—Marble Arch and North London: (Marble Arch). Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. L. EBURY and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, November 21st, 6.30 p.m.: F. A. RIDLEY, Free-thought in 1965."

Manchester Branch NSS (The Wheatsheaf Hotel, High Street), Sunday, 21st November, 7.30 p.m.: F. J. CORINA, "God and the Politicians."

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, 21st November, 7.30 p.m.: Simon Ellis, "Modernising Britain."

Northamptonshire Humanist Group (Carnegie Hall, Abingdon Street), Friday, 26th November, 7.45 p.m. Forum: "Religion in the school." Speakers, DAVID COLLIS, H. W. JOHNSON, JENNIFER ROUTLEDGE, REV. PETER STUBBS, DEREK WRIGHT. Written questions and enquiries to John Phillips, 5 Albion Place, Northampton. Tel. 35780.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.1), Sunday, 21st November, 11 a.m.: H. J. BLACKHAM, "Secular Progress." Tuesday, 23rd November, 7.30 p.m.: M. HURWITT, "Police Behaviour."

Notes and News

AFTER HIS defeat in the New York mayoral election by Republican John Vliet Lindsay, the Democratic candidate Abraham Beame was asked to name the villain of the piece and replied, "William Buckley." This, as Alistair Cooke remarked in the *Guardian* (4/11/65) confirmed a pre-election survey which showed that for every Republican vote Lindsay would lose to the Conservative Buckley, Beame would lose two Democrats. Furthermore, Mr. Beame's losses would be "very noticeably Irish and Italian Catholics." He was losing them, Mr. Cooke added, "not so much to the Catholic Buckley as to the reactionary Buckley."

★

MR. COOKE saw the big swing of Democratic votes to Conservative as "a small symptom of a big ailment" that is spreading from the American West and through the Middle West: the growing power of the John Birch Society and other Rightist groups on school boards, city medical departments, parent-teacher associations, public libraries, and municipal government in general.

★

IN A speech before the local council of the American Jewish Congress in June, John V. Lindsay questioned New

York's new law permitting the state to provide textbooks for parochial schools. It went, he thought, over the boundary of church-state separation. And he urged that a court test case be brought. Msgr. Farricker replied that the new textbook law was a good one, but "only a drop in the bucket" in aid to parochial schools (*Church and State*, October 1965). And John L. Sullivan, past president of the Holy Name Society of a New York Catholic Church, said that "it was not the duty of a mayoral candidate . . . to question state law."

★

THE REACTION of an American public (state) school teacher, who asked that her name should not be used, was different. She was delighted at Mr. Lindsay's stand. If parents wish, she said, "they have every right to send their offspring to private or parochial schools. But it is unfair to ask the taxpayer to subsidise them to any degree."

★

HERE IN England, the *Catholic Herald* (29/10/65) welcomed the appointment of Dr. Horace King as Speaker to the House of Commons. A Methodist, he had always shown a marked sympathy for denominational schools" and his "understanding of the problems facing Catholic education is well known." Mr. Robert Mellish, Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, and a Roman Catholic, said that Dr. King had always been "a good friend to the cause of Catholic schools." Dr. King had said that he did not want to be involved in any arguments as to whether there should be denominational schools or not. "But since the 1944 Education Act had recognised the principle of denominational schools in the country's educational system, they were a fact and should be paid for by the state." It is true, of course, that the 1944 Act perpetuated the dual system. But state recognition of denominational schools need not entail state support.

★

"AM I an Irishwoman?" asks Brigid Brophy in the *New Statesman* (5/11/65). By nativity, schooling and economics she was English; she went quite often to Dublin, but only because it was a beautiful city. And yet the geography and history of Ireland holds her imagination "in a melancholy magic spell." But this is not because Miss Brophy is Irish, if she is; it is because the history of Ireland is "unbearably sad." The Irish-English, "touched with two nationalities but belonging to none," should know, said Miss Brophy, "that the worst thing an oppressor imposes, when it holds down a nation, is nationalism; the ultimate wickedness committed by England was to drive Ireland into a nationalistic act of cutting off its nose to spite its face. . . . Like wise, they, if anyone, should know the bitter folly of religious intolerance." In Ireland there were three permissible answers to the question, "What is your religion?"—Catholic, Protestant and Jewish. Miss Brophy who has to answer "None" is, in Ireland, "neither a foreigner nor an Irishwoman, but an invisible woman."

★

FATHER B. S. CRITTENDEN, of Sydney University has (we learn from the *Catholic Herald*, 29/10/65), urged the abandonment of the Catholic school system in Australia and recommended that Catholic children should attend the state schools "with the rest of society." The ecumenical movement, Father Crittenden said, had meant a growing appreciation for other Christians, non-Christians and Atheists.

Sungods and Messiahs

By GEORGE R. GOODMAN

IN ANSWER to Mr. Cutner's queries on September 24th, 1965, I should like to state that my article "Easter" on May 7th, 1965, was, originally, not written for THE FREETHINKER, but for that perpetual propagator of orthodoxy's fables and deception, our reactionary BBC, upholder of the established Church and her reason-insulting dogmatism. I had left out references to sources, as they would have made the article too long and cumbersome for a magazine like *The Listener*; all the same, my MSS were returned.

But I have no hesitation in stating that my sources were, in the main, the following books:—

Gerald Massey's, *Ancient Egypt, The Light of the World; The Natural Genesis*; and *Book of the Beginnings*; and the American author Dr. Alvin Boyd Kuhn's *The Lost Light; Who is this King of Glory?* and *Shadow of the Third Century*.

The last three books are indispensable to serious investigators and as they are most efficiently indexed and all sources clearly stated, any name or happening in connection with the Church's innumerable frauds and forgeries, can be found within seconds. And the books are available in most libraries in Britain and America.

To start with, the feast which in English-speaking countries is called Easter (German *Ostern*), cannot—as Mr. Cutner rightly points out—claim to be either Egyptian, Jewish or Christian. Nor could the Saxons with the goddess Eastre or Eostra claim originality. The height of their pagan cult was 700 to 1,000 years prior to the Saxon invasion of Britain and, by the time they invaded, their old cult had already undergone great modifications, owing to their contacts with Rome and Gaul.

In olden times, the Spring Equinox was always most joyously celebrated wherever there were human beings, immaterial of their beliefs or unbeliefs. It was only wretched Roman Catholicism, with its witless creeds and grisly passion-week, that turned the Friday before Easter into a melancholic monstrosity. Ignoring the Church's wet blanket, what could be more welcome than the sunlight's annual return, awakening nature and putting new life into plants, insects, fishes, birds, small and large mammals—not forgetting the human family.

All we are, all we hold and enjoy, all we possess in the way of a healthy body and mind, we owe to the sun. The ancients realised this and adored the sun. We still do, and take our holidays in spots where we think there will be plenty of sunshine, so that we can soak up the health promoting rays into our system.

The dogma manufacturers, in order to produce a historical Jesus, not only turned a solar deity into a Christ, but also turned everything else upside down. The death and burial of the sungod was always at the September equinox, when the sun was "dying". This event was, quite naturally, followed by 40 days of lamentations (Lent), ending on October 31st, the date of our Halloween. This is the true Lent, not where the Church placed it, at the wrong side of the year. It goes right against the laws of nature and does not fit in with the natural symbolism of a solar year, to lament and fast—40 days in the Spring when all nature is bursting to release its accumulated energies.

Halloween was originally a feast when masks of animal heads were worn, accompanied by a lot of horseplay, buffoonery and weird capers. Why? Because, according to

the mythos, the gods hid themselves during the winter months in animal bodies and the deities, not being used to being in animal bodies, behaved strangely and ungainly. But when the Church arbitrarily and quite unreasonably turned November 1st into a morbid "All Soul's Day", the masquerading in animal masks was transferred to Midsummer-night (compare Shakespeare), where it is really quite unseasonable.

The ten days of Penitence in the Jewish Calendar, culminating in the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) are, even now, a yearly reminder of the ancient custom of fasting, confession of sins and lamentations for the dying sungod, though the latter is not mentioned nowadays.

The sad days were, with the ancients, always in the autumn, when the light of the solar god was waning. To place the "death" amidst nature's happy rejuvenescence is a monstrous anachronism and an ineptitude such as only dogmatic churchmen could have enacted. Why did they do it? The could hardly ask their dupes to wait six months for the "resurrection." Yet to place the death of an invented "Saviour and redeemer" at a period of year when all nature shouts joy and re-awakening from Winter's sleep, is a foul blasphemy against the cycle of life.

The address to the deity by the early Christians was up to the fifth or sixth century, "Our Lord, the Sun!". After that it was altered to "Our Lord, the God!". The Messiahs were all incarnations of the sun (see Gerald Massey's and Dr. Kuhn's books) and Easter is always on the 14th Nisan (Jewish month) or the first Sunday (Christian date) after the first full moon following the Spring Equinox. The date itself is a clear indication that we are dealing with sun mythology (or worship) and not with any historical event. That is also the reason why the stories of all sun-heroes, messiahs, founders of great religions—not forgetting the sixteen crucified saviours—are the same all over the world.

The Christ-story in the gospels was merely a rescript of many antecedent allegorical biographies of Pagan cult-gods such as Cybele, (Thrygia and Asia Minor) identical with Rheia (in Greek mythology), Atys of Phrygia, Janus (Italy), Prometheus (Greece) who was chained to a rock; and particularly Osiris, Isis and Horus (Iusa) of Egypt which were taken over lock, stock and barrel.

The gospel writers borrowed myths from Pagan sources so much so that when missionaries, in later centuries, came to India, they were completely baffled and nonplussed. They could not understand how the Indians had already similar stories of their own about Krishna Jesus who had lived 550 BC! Likewise, on arrival in Mexico, the Christian missionaries were amazed to find a cult of the cross and many other apparently "Christian" usages. The native of Mexico had already, prior to the advent of Europeans, a crucified god whose attractive name was Quetzalcoatl.

In the *Mahabharata*, the great epic poem of ancient India, are two characters Arjuna and Krishna, whose names are not very far in sound and spelling from John and Christ! And in the Tibetan language, there is also Argjun (Ar-John), who was the assistant and associate of Krishna. Martin Luther called John the Baptist Johannes der Wiedertauffer (the again baptiser). In the Chaldean Genesis there is a Ioannes (Joannes), the first avatar of Vishnu, not so very far removed from the biblical Jonah and Luther's Johannes.

Augustine calls Jesus a fish—Greek *Ichthys*—and so

"it is the mystical name of Christ, because he descended alive into the depths of this mortal life, as into the abyss of waters". The Early Christians had a fish on their door-posts, drew a fish in the sand as a Lodge sign, marked their urns with fishes (not a cross, which does not appear before the sixth to seventh century), their priests had a fish-mouth as a headgear (they still have, but it is now called "mitre"!) and the "door of life" at the western end of a church is in the shape of a fish-mouth.

Moreover, a fish-bladder (*Vesica piscis*) was and still is the symbol of Christ, but is now called *Aureola*, an oval-shaped bladder, in which the entire upright figure of the Christ can be seen, (see any stained glass-window) complete with his Egyptian sun-disc, the mark of his being the sun-god. No wonder, the Early Christians were called *Pisciculi*, meaning "Little Fishes". Their Christ was the big fish (*Ichthys*) and the disciples Fishermen.

It would be erroneous to point to the year 2000 BC and assert that that was the year when the Egyptian "Messiah" did the identical things that the Gospel Jesus performed or was alleged to suffer. The Egyptians linked their religion to the sun, (i.e. a sun-god with numerous underlings), the seasonal happenings, including the Nile inundations (which were most important to them) and to the star-clusters through which the sun travelled; in other words, the cycle of the zodiac. Apart from that, they had a whole pantheon of gods in the underworld, who attended to the souls of the departed, when they arrived there.

Whereas the Christian passion drama was alleged to have happened only once and to a historical person (completely invented), the old Egyptians had the sagacity to say, without any equivocations, that their passion drama was allegorical and was, therefore, performed every year at the right season. That the Egyptians had also a very extended animal-cult which underwent great changes in the course of many centuries (covering 3,200 years) is, for the purpose of our investigations, of minor importance, because we are, in the main, interested in their Trinity, Osiris, Isis and Horus.

Even the latter underwent some changes which is quite natural, because nothing remains static on this Earth, whether in the domain of science, politics or religion.

(To be concluded)

Biblical Sophistry

By F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

READERS of Anglo-Catholic literature will know well the name of Fr. Gabriel Hebert of the Society of the Sacred Mission, Kelham. Within the confines of his theology, he is well read and scholarly and an able contributor to theological debate in several fields. His present paperback, *The Old Testament from Within* (Oxford University Press, (Oxford Paperbacks, No. 100, Oxford University Press, 7s. 6d.), is a reprint of a book issued some years ago on the Old Testament. Taking the various sections, the Law, the Prophets and the Writings, he seeks to draw out of them the religious message which they enshrine. Thus, the Old Testament is traced out from the Creation by God to fulfilment of the final Old Testament message in the coming of Christ. As Fr. Hebert admits, he does not discuss critical questions nor does he attempt to write an historical introduction. His purpose is to seek out the religious revelation which completes the whole picture.

It would be easy to say that this is not the point of view of a secular humanism and to leave the matter there. But some comment is permissible. Fr. Hebert is reading back his own developed theology into the ancient Hebrew

literature and seeking to find its fulfilment. At the very outset, there would not be a unanimous agreement about the message which he finds there. For example, a Jewish commentator would agree with some of his assertions about monotheism but would deny its fulfilment in the Gospels. Fr. Hebert's method is none other than the historic Christian method from the Patristic period onwards, and will only appeal to somebody who is already committed to the theology. Again, it does not differ from the Islamic approach to the Koran. The seeking out of some esoteric message lying behind the sacred literature is not a method unique to Patristic Christianity. In any case, it is highly subjective and lacking in the evidential tests which the critical or historical scholar would demand the right to apply.

But it also raises the question of inspiration and revelation. The traditional Christian Church argued in this way simply because it had a propositional theory of revelation in and through the Bible, not unlike the outlook of fundamentalism pure and simple. But the impact of modern critical scholarship has shattered this fundamentalism. Treated evidentially, there is not a scrap of evidence that the collection known as the Old Testament is other than ancient Hebrew literature. The development of religious belief in ancient Israel can be tracked down through it in exactly the same way as the development of Christian belief could be tracked down through the corpus of and pre- and post-Reformation Christian literature generally.

This does not assert that the belief is true as such, or that a valid esoteric meaning can be traced in the pages. The seeking out of typological interpretations has been popular in recent years in certain circles concerned with biblical study. I once heard it described irreverently but pointedly by a learned liberal Protestant as the solving of a sort of spiritual crossword puzzle. It is a delusion merely because it is not securely grounded in a critical appraisal of the documents themselves. For example, it merely ignores the extent to which the documents are literary forms of Hebrew legend and mythology, or the extent to which modern anthropological or folklore studies have related this particular folklore to that of other cultures. By separating out the Bible from every other form of ancient literature or religious writing and then arguing upon the details, it can demonstrate anything that it wishes to do. But there is a clear fallacy in the whole approach.

The freethinker who spends an evening with Fr. Hebert's book will not have wasted his time. He will have been introduced into the biblical sophistry of the traditional Christian Church, a sophistry which went far towards creating the doctrinal culture upon which the Church erected its claims over human civilisation, and he will have encountered something standing in a diametrically opposed position to humanism so far as its estimate of man be concerned. Thinking historically, it is of far deeper moment than the reduced theology of, for example, the Bishop of Woolwich. In some ways, it is akin to modern Roman Catholic biblical writing. But he will also have encountered something which likewise stands in diametrically opposed position in its whole interpretation of the natural order to that which has arisen out of the liberal humanistic culture from the Renaissance onwards. Fr. Hebert is at one with the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, and the vision of Langland is one which the modern world has set aside.

PILL BEFORE POPE

Students at Liverpool University Union voted last night to send a telegram to the Pope telling him that in a debate earlier, the motion: "This House prefers the Pill to the Pope," had been carried by 155 votes to 60.—*The Guardian* (3/11/65).

The Marxian View of Religion

WE LIVE in a capitalist world; a system of society based on the private or state ownership of the means and forces of wealth production, the exploitation of man by man and the class struggle. The Christian religion and the brotherhood of man were never practical possibilities in such a social order of society. The Marxist believes that world socialism will overcome the contradictions of capitalism, the self-estrangement of man divided against himself in political and economic alienation. "Only then," said Engels, "will the last alien power which is now reflected in religion vanish. And with it will also vanish the religious reflection itself, for the simple reason that there will be nothing left to reflect."

Man made religion. In the course of evolution the first men reached a stage of primitive thought; the elements of nature confronted them as alien forces in the struggle for existence. With the development of self-consciousness early man saw the forces of nature as supernatural powers endowed with a life of their own, with spirits and gods. In his awe and fear primitive man found a need to appease the god of thunder in his wrath and influence the spirits of the forest and the mountain.

With the emergence of a religious consciousness man duplicates himself in a world of religious fantasy wherein his human essence is reflected in gods of his own creation. Man becomes estranged with himself in a religious ideology of self-alienation. Man's own powers appear as self-subsistent forces or entities of which he becomes a victim. Religion is primitive man's philosophy; to curry favour with the supernatural powers that control the weather and fertility of crops and to ward off natural disaster he formulates magic rites, incantations and sacrifices.

The formulation of magico-religious rituals produces priestcraft and the first priest appears with his mumbo-jumbo and magic hand passes.

In his further struggle through human labour in producing the means of life man gains a true knowledge of the laws of nature and ejects the spirits and gods of the natural elements and passes from the "dark kingdom of physical necessity into a realm of freedom.

But the productive action of man on nature and continued improvement in the means of living, common property (primitive communism) gives way to private property. Man returns to a new form of alienation or estrangement with himself. Man again becomes a victim of his own creation in the kingdom of economic necessity — the exploitation of man by man.

The religious alienation does not vanish but continues in a new form. For with the progress in the material basis of society there is reflected in the religious sphere the last figment of man's religious alienation. This is the development of monotheism, the idea of the one almighty god, ruler over the whole universe. This historical period brings us down to the present day. Religious alienation only occurs in the sphere of consciousness, in the inner life of man, but economic alienation is that of real life.

World socialism, while emancipating mankind from the economic alienation in the material basis of society simultaneously dispels the religious illusions reflected in the ideological superstructure of society. As Marx said: "Socialism as a complete naturalism is humanism, and as a complete humanism is naturalism. It is the definite resolution of the antagonism between man and Nature, and between man and man. It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be this solution."

R. STUART MONTAGUE

CORRESPONDENCE

PIUS XII

Father G. M. Paris, O.P., of Malta, mentioned Miss Phyllis K. Graham's "calumnies" against the Pope.

Will he deny that Pius XII not only failed to condemn, but supported with his blessing the Italian invasion of Abyssinia?—in which, by the way, people were lethally sprayed with poison gas?

S. G. KNOTT

AGNOSTICISM

I'd like to comment on Chapman Cohen's article in *THE FREETHINKER* of October 15th on "Agnosticism." As an Agnostic myself, I want to say at once, that Mr. Cohen's wordy and exhausting denunciation of our creed, left me rather cold, but more than ever convinced that I am right when I say that a man is as foolish to say he *knows* there is no God, as the man who says he *knows* there is! This, the Christian and the Atheist have in common, it seems, together with the fact that both seem to be forever arguing their respective cases, whereas the Agnostic has no case to need to answer.

The Atheist and the Christian do not tell the truth, when they say they *know* there is no God, or there is, respectively, whereas the Agnostic speaks the simple truth that he does not know. He is not taking any middle courses, or squatting on any fences, nor evincing any fears at "abandoning all his gods," as someone, an Atheist, put it. I, at any rate, have never said, "I neither affirm nor deny the existence of God"—I merely follow the use of the word in conversation with "if there be a God"—Mr. Cohen uses the words "gods" (the ancient variety) and "God" (the present day one) as though they all were tangible entities. For example, "There are a multitude of gods in the world—gods are contemptibly common." And "the only helpful definition of God was that God began as a company of spirits, *which definition I accept!*"

The Agnostic would say (on mentioning *any* of these "gods" or "God")—"if these existed or exist," to demonstrate that he has no knowledge of such entities, but is open to conviction, whereas Mr. Cohen, with his next breath, denies even the possibility of such existence! And what does Mr. Cohen mean by "the terrible thing, Atheism?" Quoting this author again, "The Agnostic warmly declares he knows nothing about God." On this, Mr. Cohen, we are agreed! But do not follow this, please, by putting words into the Agnostic's mouth to better your argument—"What he says is (by implication) neither does anyone else," thus—when he justifies this he justifies the position taken up by the Atheist. This, to me, is not so. The Atheist, like the Christian, is dogmatic—the Agnostic is prepared to continue his search for the Truth, and knowledge, but, at present, must say in all humility, "I do not *know*." Chapman Cohen was obviously much more learned than I, but all that I have said, I can claim as original thinking—though I may be mistaken and find, later, that all this has been said before.

A word on the seemingly rather unkind attack on Mrs. Kit Mouat in a recent letter in *THE FREETHINKER*. I, and many others, have an unbounded admiration for the writings and the Humanist work of this lady, and wish her every success in her splendid endeavours. She has been a friend to my son, my wife, and to me.

JOHN SHEPHARD.

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to REMIND ourselves of a few basic notions concerning the relations of the Roman Catholic clergy and laity, we can turn to the Catholic press, the British weeklies. In the advertisement columns you will often see an appeal to the Catholic family. "A priest of your own," it runs. Boys of good character and reasonable intelligence are required for juniorates and seminaries, to be elevated to the dizzy heights of the priesthood in their middle twenties. The parting with their family may be poignant, but the benefits will be definite. When the parents have grown old and sit by the fireside, amidst their grandchildren, they can find comfort in that Dominic, or Benedict, or Aloysius, each morning participates in the universal Church's work of reparation by offering the Sacrifice of the Mass. When their last hour draws near, God will remember they gave a son to the Church, a son who will bless, pray, intercede for them. Such a family will be specially blessed. It is not only for the social kudos this gives in a Catholic community—the mother bends over the cradle and dreams of her offspring clad in chasuble and alb in the years ahead. A mother may even so "sell" the idea of priesthood to a son that he is forced into the wrong mould, and becomes what is known as a "spoiled" priest. But I do not intend to be cynical. The life is arduous and self-sacrificing, and a boy of fine character may be condemned to give of his best in the service of error, in mistaken idealism. As other families wish their boy to be a doctor, an engineer, so a Catholic boy or parent will laud this, the vocation of vocations. There is pride and rejoicing in a good Catholic family when a son goes to be Beda! It is not a matter for anger and dismay.

Priest and Pope.

Now consider further. Basically, we have priesthood in pope, cardinal, archbishop, bishop, Father O'Grady round the corner. Each is a priest. Each has had the holy oil laid upon him, each has prostrated himself to receive the ineradicable marks of the Sacrament of Orders. This is the basic similarity.

The priesthood comes afresh from the laity each generation. Books, for popular consumption, on Pius XII, or John XXIII, start by showing them as little boys in the bosom of their family. The priest may never go further than the next parish, or he may end by concluding concordats or raising his fingers in benediction *urbi et orbi*. But every priest is born a layman and must derive enormously from his family environment.

When the priest crosses from the lay state to the sacerdotal, the Catholic believes that his soul receives a distinctive character. The priest is not just a man with his collar the other way round. If he were stranded naked on a desert island, God would recognise him as different. He can do things his natural born lay brothers cannot do—handle the sacred host, absolve, exorcise: to him are given the keys of the kingdom. This is not just theory, or "seeing things" in the Catholic viewpoint, it is utter-

ly realistic. It is supported by a worked out and highly developed theology. That the results are tangible in their effect on the world even an unbeliever can agree. Through this priesthood, doctrine and dogma are handed down, and the routines that bind the dying, living, marrying, sinning, begetting laity to the Church are dispensed.

Not Above Criticism.

But it does not mean the priesthood is above criticism.

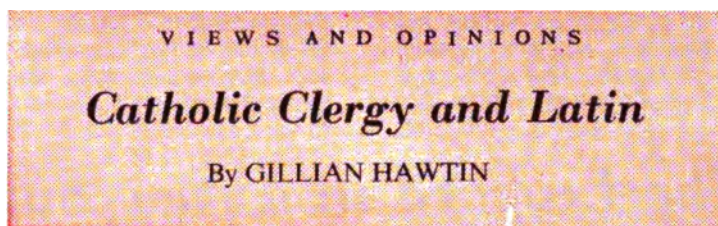
The mother may gaze in wonder at her son's hands for the sacred chrism that has anointed them. The next minute motherhood may assert itself, and chide him for leaving off the black pullover she has newly knitted for him. The office and the man, too,

may be distinguished. Thus a Catholic will argue that there has never been a bad pope (being safeguarded by God), only bad men. A priest may be immoral, but his absolution may save a dying man. Even Graham Greene's "whisky priest" was a priest for ever according to the law of Melchisidech. The sacredness of the priesthood is beyond the frailty of the man, which is *not* to say they are exempt from criticism. That is what outsiders rarely understand, especially since criticism is regarded as a domestic matter. There are family loyalties. Catholics may run Father So-and-So down, but they will be resentful of outside criticism. Like schools, like sports teams, they may hold post-mortems behind closed doors, but there must be no scandal. Let outsiders attempt to join in, and the door is slammed in their faces; the ranks are closed.

Protestant evangelism in Catholic countries has often failed to appreciate this; to realise that the criticism is not in the least to be confused with anti-clericalism. On the contrary, it is the more likely to be active, even rampant, the better the Catholics. Does sluggish Pat Murphy, who has not been near the sacraments these 40 years, soaking gin at the pub, care about the schools question, or Cardinal Heenan's pronouncements on birth control? It is the earnest, the intellectual, the lay people who want to be "at one" with their Church, living with the mind and soul of the Church, that care for these things. Hence the folly of misreading what Catholics themselves would regard only as healthy and reasonable criticism, for signs that the times are ripe to promote a cleavage between laity and hierarchy; this is to misunderstand the whole basic conception of the organic relationship between the two, and probably bears no little connection to the out-moded Protestant conception of the Catholic laity being priest-ridden.

No New Departure.

This may be true of Sicily, or early 19th-century Ireland (where, however, priests sprung from the native soil were not seldom vigorous nationalist leaders), but it is not true of England or Western Europe generally, today. It may be true of peasant and agricultural communities, not of sophisticated and urban ones. That is why people who did not realise this, were surprised when the Church



received criticism from its own members in the book *Objections to Roman Catholicism*. They thought it was a new departure; to find otherwise they ought to read the back numbers of the *Tablet*! I remember an eminent Irish Catholic remarking in a lecture in Ireland: "The best Catholic is not always the meek sheep, but he who grabs the pastoral staff and trips him up with its crook." Whatever may be true of Scotland, or France, or Italy, this country (despite a sturdy independence) has not a history of anti-clericalism, even before the Reformation.

Education.

Regard the matter, in particular, in relation to the specific issue of education. We are sometimes fed, even from secularist platforms, the idea that it isn't really the Catholic laity but only the priests who want their own schools. Take it from one who had twenty years' contact with Catholicism (most of that time spent either as a pupil, a student, or a teacher in Catholic places of education and in close contact with parents and nuns and lay teachers) that such an idea is just sheer nonsense. One child of a mixed marriage may be sent to a Protestant school, but

a general rule should not be drawn from a particular instance. The undermanned priesthood hasn't the coercive power, against all the disruptive forces of contemporary England, to force such a policy on an *unwilling* laity. The truth is, the Faith is considered the Pearl of Great Price, essential for salvation, and its transmission from generation to generation is all-important both to the individual and for the leavening of society, for the continued life of the *ecclesia docens*.

Nursery of Faith.

The school is the nursery of faith, it must give the correct theological tone, have a Catholic staff, exclude alien influences. The demand for Catholic schools follows logically from the belief they do not only possess *some* truth, but that Catholicism *is* Truth, and God-derived truth. In this, and in other living problems of today, clergy and laity are tied together as intimately as once they were in the family circle. Obviously, in the case of *Clergy v. Laity*, although as in other civil suits, the *v.* may look like *versus* to the uninitiated, those in the know, the professionals, read and pronounce it as "and"!

The Leopard in a New Suit

(Reply to a Letter from G. M. Paris OP, of Malta)

By PHYLLIS K. GRAHAM

THE Rev. Father Paris OP credits me with "statistics of calumnies against the Pope, including John XXIII and the Church." Calumnies? If he can prove this, on irrefutable evidence, no one will be happier than I. For it is not a happy experience to learn that the Organisation to which one has sacrificed the better part of one's life is guilty of countenancing—and committing—such crimes against humanity. So—would the learned Father care to accept the challenge, perhaps by personal correspondence? If convicted I will do public penance (televised, of course) with sheet and candle.

Now, about these "statistics" . . . I *had* thought my article dealt with facts (or calumnies?), not figures. However, I realise what immense value the Church of Rome puts on "statistics", so I am not too mystified by the good Father's invitation to "note two other statistics." I presume he wishes me to draw a comparison between "the works of the Church for the poor all over the world" and "similar philanthropic good made by Secularists," and to find myself duly appalled by the contrast.

He may be surprised to learn that I am already quite familiar with this mental exercise. Only, being a Secularist, I am definitely less interested in statistics than in humanity and human progress. The obvious fact that Secularists are "in the red" on the balance sheets of Organised Charity does not greatly worry me, though naturally I would prefer it to be otherwise. But I have to remember (and perhaps the good Father might also be reminded?) that whereas the Church, in building up her flourishing business concerns, has merely had to contend with the world, the flesh and devil (or use them as her allies), we poor Secularists have had to contend with the Church as well. This, even a son of St. Dominic must admit, can be a handicap.

However, no tears for that. Secularists have a way of quietly and persistently going about their business (earthworms, perhaps, that without show or glory do the fundamental work which keeps evolution on the move), and, getting down to the comparison on lines of human ecology, we discover they haven't done so badly after all.

Take slavery, to start with. The Founder of Christianity ignored it. Paul (often regarded as the founder) approved and encouraged it. The Church supported it without question, till the Secularist struggle for human freedom and dignity fanned her indifference into ferocious ardour. Her characteristic responses—imprisonment, the rack and the stake, were gradually muffled as her power declined, but her Big-Business instincts went on fighting to the bitter end. Whew! What a tussle. But a big bulge on the credit side for the Secularists, I think.

Other items loom large on the credit column. For instance, the final undoing of the dirty work of Innocent VIII and his *Malleus Maleficarum*: a prolonged fight against the torture and burning of witches. Victory only hove in sight after three centuries of horrid cruelty. Here in England it was not officially won till the Act of Parliament in 1736. Subsequent echoes from that reign of terror have appalled even our enlightened century. Since witch-hunting was essentially a religious rite, based on the text "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," I think we anti-religionists can be congratulated on our victory in the battle for mercy.

Need I point the parallel in the battle for religious toleration? The Reverend Father, spiritual descendant of Father Dominic and of Torquemada, must be well acquainted with the facts (or calumnies?) of Christendom's more gruesome spots of history. He must also by now be aware of the final capitulation to Secularist ideas of brotherly love, announced—if a little late and reluctantly—by a certain recent papal decree. The whole subject may possibly be delicate, if not embarrassing, to a "Hound of the Lord," so I will say no more.

The study and treatment of mental illness and psychopathic disorders has been taken over and revolutionised by "Secularist" psychology. Previously society's misfits, supposedly "possessed by devils," were dealt with by exorcism, ridicule, and the most brutal treatment. "Secular" psychology had to point the way to a Church that knew no psychology. She didn't, you know, and she doesn't possess much now, except what she borrows from

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Character Deformation

By P. G. ROY

R from being conducive to "character formation," religion rather tends to deform it; a healthy child in normal condition brings into this world million of years of genetic experience of social life and is naturally able to develop to a valuable member of the society. Therefore nobody, even parents, have a right to "mould" young minds by their lop-sided teaching by the inculcation of controversial and intolerant religious dogma, instead of inlining the vehicle of progress and education: the virtue of honest doubt and the urge to accept nothing that has undergone the test of veracity.

The various vendors of "spiritual values" must be aware that the majority of the inmates of reformatories, penitentiaries and prisons are people amply instructed in "spiritual values" of religion. Many criminals are fervent believers, which proves that the Churches have no dam against crime and that the general loss of faith is not the cause of rampant evils in society. Basically, religion is not interested in material betterment and real social welfare (which, if attained, would destroy the roots of transcendental hope).

Social values pass through the crucible of social experience and are determined by their degree of social utility; and it should be clear that morality changes with changes in the history of the community; that a fixed code of morality, set up in, and befitting a long passed stage of society, is utterly unsuitable today. A hundred years ago was both legal and moral in the USA (as it was for the authors of the scriptures) to own chattel slaves. And at that time, people in this country, with interests in the Lancashire mills, hoped for a victory of the South, for the destruction of slave labour meant a rise in the price of American cotton. The wheel of history turned on, and we no longer subscribe to the ownership of slaves. We do not burn witches alive or have workers chained in the fields.

It was through the decrease in religious beliefs, not by preserving the letter of Holy Script, that humanity in general has improved on biblical ethics and the gruelling ages of ancient times. Certain moral codes, the mere varnish coating of primitive superstitions in religion, have paved the way for the perpetuation of religious beliefs, and thus led to a widening conflict between religious conservatism and historical adjustments in a world of changing social needs; upholding ritualistic precepts against enlightened adult morality and better judgment. Petrified morality becomes immorality.

The particular needs of the ruling set in any system of society determines in the main the morality of that system and corrupts its standard of ethics. It is not insufficient indoctrination in religion, it is more the surfeit of crime stories and thrillers of violence and glorification of war, printed, sound and cellulose, that has lowered standards. Not only is healthy morality independent of religion, it is even incompatible with the belief in god.

Time and again it must be stressed that before the appearance of private property and the exploitation of man through man there was no god and hence no religion proper. God therefore represents exploitation and injustice as the imaginary bestower of wealth and insurer of property.

To be decent in order to be rewarded, to abstain from evil merely for fear of punishment does not show moral backbone. On the contrary it may have a demoralising influence, creating the "virtue" of the coward, and ending with a vengeance. Neither temporal nor eternal justice can deflect the born criminal who is ready to take risks

in a society where crime appears to pay. Social laws were discovered by experience before they could be written down in a code and sanctioned by religion.

Religion, that is the perpetuation of social injustice and the existing class society, began with the commandment: Thou shalt not steal—neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet his house, his field, his slave, nor anything that is thy neighbour's. The protection of property, always acquired at the detriment of "neighbours," needed the invention of an omniscient god and religious sanction of social disparity. The Churches extol charity, which is a cheap means of cheating the havenots out of their fair share of the vital necessities of life. Honest means and hard work rarely lead to the accumulation of wealth; the conversion of collective assets to private benefit can only be accomplished through out-smarting others; this includes gambling, the last hope of the members of a moribund society who are after cheap gain.

All religious teaching could be dispensed with; it adds nothing to the character a man brings into this society; rather does it cripple and deform an unspoilt outlook. All ethics boil down to the few words of the "Golden Rule," which—contrary to general belief—is not Christian in origin.

Lord Chesterfield thought that "Do as you would be done by," was the "plain, sure and undisputed rule of morality and justice." Bernard Shaw, however, made the pertinent objection that tastes differ as to what a person likes or dislikes. Therefore the inhibitory formation in which the Chinese, Germans and others put this thumb-rule is preferable: Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself.

"Take no thought for the morrow," the believer will preach, and "If you deeply trust in the Lord, you can swallow poison and handle snakes with impunity." But will he, if he is sane? The Sermon of the Mount, as Schweitzer remarked, was not meant as a guide to conduct in normal conditions; it was an "interim ethics to be practised in singular circumstances." And those circumstances were the expectation of the imminent coming of the Day of Judgment following the close of temporal history. A life of righteousness and love was urged only in expectation of impending judgment, not as an eternal code.

A code cannot strictly be called "moral" except in so far as the sanction comes from the apprehension of evil social results directly accruing from the conduct the code forbids. Here we have the distinction between the religious idea of "sin" and the moral idea of "wrong." The two ideas are naturally blended or associated in many minds, but we cannot understand the difference between religion and morals unless we distinguish between them . . . Thinkers like Herbert Spencer and Thomas Huxley . . . maintain that a moral code can never become pure and wholly responsive to the needs of a changing society unless it is dissociated from the special sanction of religion . . . Since men, especially in prescientific ages and circles, have conceived supernatural powers according to his fears . . . in ignorance and misinterpretation of the phenomena of nature, his religious codes could scarcely be a true reflection of his social needs. They often perverted social relationships and admitted or inspired conduct detrimental to social interests.

(MacIver & Page: *Sociology*.)

In highly advanced civilisations such as China's the moral principle becomes so dominant that the religious principle proper grows obsolescent; in others, both remain integrated, yet lead to difficult problems of interpretation,

(Concluded on page 380)

This Believing World

THE TRIAL and death of Christ still provide material for books galore, and we note that the London *Evening News* (3/11/65) had a full length review of a book by Guy Schofield, *Why Was He Killed?* Felix Barker, the reviewer, like Mr. Schofield, naturally accepts "irrefutable facts" from the Gospels without producing a scrap of evidence that they are facts. And the trouble with Jesus was that he was "far too liberal for" the Jews. Any evidence? Not a scrap. But it is in "Holy Writ," the Inspired Work of God Himself. What more proof is needed?

★

However, Mr. Schofield does have a fling at anti-Semitism. He recalls that a bishop was burnt for "heresy" in Oxford in 1554 "for his stand against Roman Catholicism." And he admits that "the Jewish people were no more responsible for the death of Jesus than the English people for the death of Hugh Latimer." We cannot imagine the Vatican and its army of cardinals agreeing with that.

★

EVERYBODY OF course knows what Paul is reputed to have written—"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." (I Cor. 13, 13). Yet, in spite of Paul, we have the vicar of Hadenham, Bucks., the Rev. V. Nickalls, resigning as a trustee of its charities and declaring (*Sunday Express*, 7/11/65), "I have wriggled out of charity work." Paul does not seem as much in favour with Christians as he once was, but for a parson to give up Christian charity must be regarded as a blow at the Christian faith. However, the vicar's absence will, we are glad to say, not stop the charity, which will be handed out as usual.

★

YET ANOTHER world-shattering change suggested. The vicar of Christ Church, Streatham, the Rev. C. T. L. Payne, wants all London cemeteries to "throw out all these tombstones" and turn the graveyards into botanical gardens and parks, with wooden crosses instead of stones (*South London Press*, 5/11/65). Of course, the idea is stoutly opposed by the National Association of Master Monumental Masons—though, with the growth of population, every slice of ground will be needed in the near future.

★

PARSONS NOT only have to contend with poor congregations but with such sects as Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons doing their best to wheedle good Christians away to the worship of strange gods. Here we have (*South London Press*, 11/11/65) the Rev. G. Heal, of Peckham, objecting to the Mormon's campaign, which is "bizarre and fantastic," and which "perverts the biblical doctrines of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, man, salvation, marriage, and the Second Coming."

★

YET IT is a fact that on all these points the Christian Churches have been at loggerheads at one time or another; and even now they have no meaning for most people. The Mormon explanation is just as silly as that of the Witnesses of Jehovah (who never elucidates for his adorers) and both are as silly as that of true Christianity. And, anyway, there are passages in the Bible which match in stupidity anything in the *Book of Mormon*. In fact, human ingenuity has never been able to beat the Bible in credulity and superstition.

THE LEOPARD IN A NEW SUIT

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sheer necessity. In spite of her wonderful array of philosophers and theologians. Because she starts from false premises about the nature of man and the universe; and how can psychological truth be based on that?

From this we pass on to the whole vast domain of progress in the sciences, which, while saluting the stupendous achievements of sons of the Church like Galileo or Mendel, we must in sober truth attribute to the courage, intelligence and dogged perseverance of the Secularist tribe. The good Father doubtless deprecates, as we all do, the misuse of knowledge by Big-Business and other vested interests; but he probably runs a car (being a modern friar) and rejoices in the multiple benefits of electricity, radio, etc., and may even on occasions have escaped pain by anaesthesia. He will surely not grudge a few good marks for all this to the Secularist earthworms.

Well, well, it seems to me, even after such a brief survey (alas, space forbids more) that we Secularists have been too much occupied with attacking the ills of humanity at the roots to do much—or as much as the Church—in the way of spraying its surface diseases. Yet the good Father need not be anxious. In the "Secularist" world that will finally emerge from this age of transition, certain items on his list may be needed less, ultimately needed not at all. I refer, of course, to "hospitals, houses for the poor . . . providing food and clothing." It has never been in the interests of Secularism, which does not cringe before the "Will of God," to run poverty, pain and disease as going concerns. Nor have Secularists any use for "missions": their watchword is not conversion but freedom.

The remaining items, "schools" and "universities", can safely be left to the gradual process of infiltration. (I could furnish the Reverend Father with some genuine statistics about our English universities, for instance, which might startle him). It's an arduous fight, we are well aware, against the fabulous wealth and unscrupulous power of a religio-political world-organisation. But Secularists, as we have seen, are stubborn fighters and patient plodders. The obscure earthworm at the base of life holds the final destiny of even popes and princes. That's nature's law.

So—don't worry, dear Rev. Father—the worms will win!

CHARACTER DEFORMATION

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resulting in the splitting up of religion into sects and groupings until, in the end, even educated people can no longer differentiate between sanity and inculcated beliefs. This becomes particularly apparent when they admit not to taking literally the Adam and Eve story, but maintain that it is a beautiful allegory and highly meritorious. The Lord not allowing man to gain knowledge by eating a certain fruit, the talking snake knowing the background story, and the jealous god then punishing mankind for ever after! Eventually they venture to say that one can remain a good Christian without taking the story literally. Yet without *literal* belief in the Original Sin the whole edifice of Christianity falls to the ground and there is no longer the slightest necessity for the Crucifixion either. So you can't have it both ways. This depraved piece of ritual slaughter is in itself something utterly harmful and has perverted European thinking for centuries; yet few people seem ever to enquire whether it really is commendable and ethical. Human cattle have for two thousand years chewed the cud of gentle Jesus over and over again without ever asking is it true.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

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OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Marble Arch and North London: (Marble Arch). Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. L. EBURY and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

North London Branch NSS (White Stone Pond, Hampstead)—Every Sunday, noon: L. EBURY.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Birmingham Branch NSS (New Victoria Hotel, Corporation Street, Sunday, November 28th, 6.45 p.m.: Miss J. M. LEVI, "The Future of the National Health Service."

Bristol Humanist Group (Kelscott, 4 Potland Street, Clifton), Sunday, November 28th, 6.30 p.m.: Mrs. FRANCES MACRAE and the Full Life."

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, November 28th, 6.30 p.m.: Mrs. FRANCES MACRAE-GIBSON, "Is the Race Problem Insoluble?"

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, November 28th, 11 a.m.: Dr. JOHN LEWIS, "Atheists Who Believe in Original Sin." Tuesday, November 30th, 7.30 p.m.: ENID LAKEMAN, "Does Your Vote Count?"

Worthing Humanist Group (Morelands Hotel, The Pier), Sunday, November 28th, 5.30 p.m.: MARGARET MCILROY, "Religion and the Rights of the Child."

Notes and News

How to retain all the benefits of establishment with none of the disadvantages. That—though it may not be expressed so plainly—is the concern of the archbishops' commission set up by the Church Assembly to consider the report of the Crown Appointments Continuation Committee. The Dean of Chester, the Very Rev. G. W. O. Addleshaw, might urge that the commission should examine the function of the royal prerogative and ask whether it was "a great idol holding up the work of the Church," but Mr. W. R. van Straubenzee, MP for Oxford, had no doubt that both church and state benefited from some form of establishment. "I beg the Assembly not to sound a call for UDI," he said, "but to have the long-sightedness and statesmanship necessary to get a negotiated settlement of problems" (*The Guardian*, 11/11/65). The visible claim for a divine authority behind all things was the more important, Mr. van Straubenzee said, in face of the atheistic attacks of the present day.

★

ANOTHER MP, Mr. M. Alison (York), regarded many of the issues coming before the House of Commons—corporal punishment, abortion, homosexual reform, and Sunday observance—as "in the province of the Christian

Church." And, when Parliament was bewildered by new and alien creeds and philosophies, and members were cajoled from every quarter, many were waiting for a trumpet call from the Church of England, which had a right to an authoritative voice in the forming of new laws. From past experience, we may expect the trumpet to call for a firm defence of the law as it stands. The Archbishop of Canterbury, it is true, spoke for the abolition of capital punishment, but we frankly can't see him arguing for reform of the abortion and homosexual laws. We hope Dr. Ramsey proves us wrong. We hope even more that, whatever he says, neither the Commons nor the Lords will treat it as authoritative.

★

ROMAN CATHOLICS were reminded by the *Observer* (14/11/65) that indulgences still exist. The *Portiuncula* indulgence, for instance, may be gained by visiting St. Francis's chapel at the Basilica of Santa Maria Degli Angeli, in Assisi, on August 2nd. From time to time—as the *Observer* said—the Church "brings indulgences up to date." In 1898 all 1,000-year indulgences were cancelled, and as recently as 1942 "a sliding scale was introduced whereby cardinals were limited to granting up to 200 days, archbishops 100 days, and bishops 50 days." But what, the paper asked, "is the meaning of days or years in Purgatory? Totting up indulgences looks rather like filling in books of green trading stamps." And "an enlightened Jesuit" was quoted as saying: "It is a thing that, frankly, I find very embarrassing."

★

"I WAS shocked when I heard it. It is a word that is used periodically and I have used it myself, but certainly never in the presence of a lady" (*Daily Telegraph*, 15/11/65). Thus Brig. Terence Clarke, Conservative MP for Portsmouth, who decided to table a question to the Postmaster-General after Kenneth Tynan, Literary Manager of the National Theatre, had used one of those notorious but unutterable four-letter words in the TV programme *BBC 3*. Mr. Tynan, who appeared with the American writer Mary McCarthy in a discussion on censorship, was asked by compere Robert Robinson if he would go so far as to allow a play to be performed in which sexual intercourse took place on the stage. Mr. Tynan said he would, and added: "I doubt if there are any rational people to whom the word ——— would be particularly diabolically or totally forbidden." And obviously it isn't *totally* forbidden as far as Brig. Clarke is concerned.

★

Mr. ROBINSON said afterwards that he was surprised when it happened. The discussion was spontaneous and there had been no run through, but he thought Mr. Tynan was "up the pole to use that word." Hugh Wheldon, Controller of Programmes, was also surprised but not appalled. It was, he said rightly, "quite germane to the discussion that was taking place." And, he added, "I thought it was a responsible discussion and a reasonable one," a view with which we concur. Someone, of course, had to ask Mrs. Mary Whitehouse what she thought of it. But it is perhaps indicative of the general indifference towards her absurd Clean-Up TV Campaign, that she is now driven to writing to the Queen in protest.

★

IT WOULD be a pity, however, if the hubbub over a word were allowed to drown some other important remarks by Mr. Tynan. Sex, he pointed out, was by no means the only subject of censorship by the Lord Chamberlain. Political and religious free speech suffer more from his depredations.

Sungods and Messiahs

By GEORGE R. GOODMAN

(Concluded from page 375)

WHEREAS the word *Christos* is Greek, the word *Messiah* is Egypto-Hebraic; both mean "anointed." The Egyptian *mes* or *mas* means to give birth to, to be born; and it also means: — to steep and to anoint. The suffix —"iah" or —"jah" is Hebrew and occurs in many names, such as Elijah, Halleluiah, Messiah, Zachariah, Abijah, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Hezekiah and many more. It can even be used as a prefix, as in the word Jahweh. Therefore, *Messiah* means: — the born (or reborn) deity or the anointed deity — or god.

Anointing with oil was throughout ancient days a ritualistic performance, signifying a baptism of man's physical (or animal) body with a substance that could be set on fire! A baptism with water is of a lower order, whereas the baptism with oil is of a more exalted order (as at the coronation of a king or queen. Oil is obviously of a higher order, because it rises to the top of water and also gives a bright, shining appearance, and thus becomes the oil of gladness).

Through the "anointing" aspect of the term *Messiah*, we come to the allied Greek name of *Christos* (Greek *Chrisein*, to anoint) and appearing also in our words *Chrism* (oil, unction) and *Chrisom* (a white cloth laid on a newly baptised child). Even the French word *Chresme* with, later on, the "s" dropped and becoming *Crème* (cream) is related to *chrism*, because it is rubbed in!

Christos is derived from the Egyptian KaRaST (Karest, Kerast), the name of the mummy prepared for burial, when it was anointed with oil. Both Osiris and Horus were called the Karast-mummy, which was symbolic of the incarnation of deity into its coffin-like case (or mummy-like crust) of the physical body—similar to a chrysalis. The comparison and similarity with a chrysalis is, in fact, striking, because the pupa of a butterfly looks exactly like a mummy and when it opens, a new life-cycle begins on a different wavelength.

The Karast-mummy was the prototype of the Church's Corpus Christi. In fact, the whole paraphernalia of the Church has been copied from the Egyptian solar-myths, continued by the Gnostics and then "christianised" by Rome! The Egyptian Karast or Krist is related to the Sanskrit *Kri* (to pour, rub over, anoint) and appears in the Indian name Krishna, indicating that he, too, was an anointed messiah.

No need to point out specially that the above Karist (the vowelings does not matter) appears again in *Eucharist*, and even in our simple words *crust* and *cross* (*crux*); the Christ-principle was alleged to have taken incarnation on the "cross of matter", because the human body, with outstretched arms, is in the shape of a cross. It was then encrusted with flesh and became a creature (from the Greek *Kreas*, flesh), in other words, it was "fleshed". Even the above mentioned *Chrysalis* of a butterfly contains the root *Kris* of the Karast (mummy) and appears again in *crystal*—a solidification of matter around a nucleus of force (from the Sun).

It remains now for the name *Iusa* to be explained. The root "*Iu*" is even mentioned on pages 22 and 40 in that excellent pamphlet of the Pioneer Press entitled *The Historical Jesus and Mythical Christ*, by Gerald Massey, explaining what Christianity owes to ancient Egypt.

It is one of the best pamphlets concerning the christian rigins, but is somewhat too condensed. When placed

into the hands of people who have not studied Egyptian mythology or are not very familiar with Greek, Latin and Hebrew expressions, it makes very heavy reading and is apt to baffle them, because the explanations in plainer language have been left out.

But to come back to *Iusa* itself. It is merely an earlier name for Horus, who was the "ever-coming-one", the prototype of all coming "saviours", dating back many thousands of years BC. *Iu* is the verb "to come"; that is its root, but sometimes it is *la*, *le*, *lo*, and often *Ja*, *Je*, *Jo* and *Ju*. This root is then combined with the Egyptian suffix *Sa* (sometimes *Se*, *Si*, *Su* and quite often with the Egyptian masculine "f", like *Saf*, *Sef*, *Sif*, *Suf*, meaning son, successor, male heir or prince).

Therefore *Iusa* means "son of the divine father *Iu*", appearing again in the words *Ju-Ptah*, i.e. Prince Iusa, eldest son of Ptah, in Latin *Ju-piter*, in Aryan *Dy-aus Pitar* (Deus Pitar), in Greek *Thios* or *Zeus*; all gods of all ancient nations were "related" to each other and, likewise, there was and is a "correspondence" between all religions! Ptah, Piter, appears again as Peter; the next step was Pater the father; then our Papa; and lastly, the papa of all papas, the Pope.

The Hebrews turned the Egyptian *Iusa* into the well-known Joshua (Josua or Jeshua) and the Greeks into Iesus. The Romans made Jesus out of Iesus and this form was retained by the Church, because there were already hundreds of Joshuas and their common name was not "holy" enough. So we were saddled with a Jesus!

Yet, like a will-o'-the-wisp, the names of *Iusa*, Horus, Jesus, Joshua, appear again in a slightly veiled form in about three hundred different names, both in and outside the Old Testament. The best example is *Ju-sef* which is pure Egyptian; the Hebrews called him *Jo-seph*, but the Muslims still call him *Jussef*. Josephus, José, Josephine, Joe, Joey are other well-known forms, all names starting with *Ja*, *Je*, *Jo*, *Ju* belong into this category, as a dictionary of biblical names will indicate.

A very typical example is the Egyptian *Io-Aan*. The Babylonians turned him into *Io-annes*, the Hebrews into *Jochanan*, the English into *John*, the Gaels into *Ian* and the French into *Jean* (not omitting the Scots *Jock*); the Italians say *Giovanni*, the Spaniards *Juan*, the Portuguese *Joao*, the Germans and Scandinavians *Johann* and *Hans*, and the Russians *Ivan*.

When in the 3rd and 4th centuries the New Testament was concocted, the papal falsifiers turned good allegory, appertaining to the seasonal "dying" of the sungod, into impossible history and landed themselves into a heap of trouble. Never for a moment did they imagine that, thanks to the Rosetta Stone, we who are living 1700 years later would be able to brand their fabled accounts as impudent forgeries!

Had they known, they would have erased the "two thieves" (who, more than any other item, gave the game away) from their farcical sob-stuff story of a "crucifixion" that never happened! Through its inaccuracies, the whole account is really laughable. It reads more like a scene from Gilbert's comic opera *The Mikado*, with its Lord High Executioner.

At Dendera (the ancient Tentyra, a village of Upper Egypt, 28 miles north of Thebes, there is a temple of

Hathor in almost perfect preservation. On the ceiling of a portico was found a Zodiac now in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. It dates from the period of Cleopatra.

In that Zodiac can be seen Horus—who is Iusa (Jesus)—on the “cross” or at the crossing of the vernal equinox, pictured with the “two thieves” Anup and Aan on either side of the Sungod. Here is authentic proof of the pre-Christian prototype of the Gospel “crucifixion” between two thieves!

Anup (who was in Greek mythology Hermes) was an Egyptian deity whose office was to guide the souls in the underworld. He can be seen in numerous bas-relief representations as a man with the head of a jackal “weighing the souls” on a pair of scales, while Osiris watches the operation.

Aan (or Taht-Aan) was the dog-headed deity, often represented as a dog-headed ape. He is generally pictured together with Anup. (See Dr. Kuhn's *The Lost Light* p. 528).

Anup and Aan were called “the two thieves of the Light”, because they were said to have stolen the “bright light of the sun”—or during an earlier cult—the Moon. On the other hand, the 12 solar characters previously mentioned were pictured as seated in the barque of Osiris. They were called the “guardians of the treasure of light”.

Gerald Massey enumerates 180 items of similarity between the Gospel Christ and his Egyptian precursor. Egypt's “Christ” was not a living person. It would have been equally fatal to Christianity if he had been. But, the fact of his non-historicity rises now out of the past—which the Bible fabricators (really copyists of earlier religions) had thought they had sealed in oblivion for ever—to strike the death-knell of the false and spurious religion called Christianity. Thus, the Gospel's “life” of Jesus turns out to be nothing but a garbled and fragmentary copy of an Egyptian prototype who had *never lived*, but was a purely dramatic type-figure of the Sungod.

The Church's deception of presenting as historical facts Gospels which now stand revealed as forgeries, must be reckoned as one of the greatest crimes in the annals of humanity, for it has retarded man's finer development by nigh on eighteen centuries. Many of the “Christianised” nations still display an inhumanity and brutality in their bellicose adventures that is uncommonly like that of the most depraved savages of 3,000 years ago—or perhaps worse. Far from being *good* influence for speeding cultural advance, orthodoxy still acts like a drag-chain on anything that savours of progress, enlightenment, harmony or brotherhood. Only through constant and insidious propaganda by means of press, radio and TV and by encouraging superstition and ritualism, can the orthodox Churches retain their hold on the untutored masses.

Anything that would dispel the ecclesiastical fog of mystification and distortion is vigorously suppressed. Light and truth are the arch-enemies of all religious denominations. The gruesome and repulsive “passion” fiction of a crucified saviour, is not only a travesty of truth, but also a nauseating mockery of grief, calculated to throw the Church's gullible devotees into paroxysms of dolorous dejection and holy pity. By hypnotising their adherents with the empty promise of a vicarious atonement and instilling a “sin-complex” (i.e. conceived in sin and constantly sinning), the Churches have turned them into dupes. Instead of encouraging nobility in their followers, they have reduced them to grovelling beggars and miserable wretches, forever pleading for mercy, in order to be “saved” by a fictitious “redeemer.” This is, perhaps, the most lamentable aspect of crazed religionism in the 20th century.

The World Union of Freethinkers

By C. BRADLAUGH BONNER

The Executive of the World Union of Freethinkers, at a meeting held at Strasbourg on July 24-25th, revised the regulations in accordance with the amendments proposed, and agreed the request of the British National Secular Society to fix the date of the next international congress as September 2nd-5th, 1966 in London; in conjunction with the celebration of the Centenary of the NSS. The two principal questions to be considered by the congress will be the historical development of Freethought on the one hand, and its future possibilities and tasks.

The National Congress of the French Freethought Federation was held at Grenoble from August 12-15th, and was preceded by a public meeting when the President of the National Federation and Vice-President of the World Union spoke on “Religion and Freethought Confronted by Present Day Problems.”

At the opening of the Congress the General Secretary R. Labrègère welcomed not only the delegates of France, but also representatives of Freethought from Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland and also from the Spanish Resistance. Greetings from the World Union were expressed by Hubert Freistühler, the Information Secretary, who emphasised the need for close international co-operation. Letters from many parts of the world, including one from the President, C. Bradlaugh Bonner, bore witness to the community of aims with the French Federation.

Having dealt with administrative questions, the Congress considered press action, propaganda, the Home for Aged Freethinkers and finally the main subject, that of Youth and Freethought.

The Federation considered that the seeming liberal changes in recent Vatican policy were in no way altering its fundamental policy of universal supremacy, and noted moreover that the Vatican, now one of the great financial powers of the world, had recently blackmailed the Italian State into giving it preferential treatment in State institutions. It also observed in France the Church intrigues to split labour and youth organisations, and with respect to the schools its rejection of any invitation to bring about a reasonable solution for national education. The Federation judges the present Government of its country to be opposed to all its own ideals, and views with great misgiving the abundant facilities offered to the Churches, especially the Roman Church, in sharp contrast with the exiguous times allotted to rationalist broadcasting, despite the considerable proportion of rationalist listeners. The aim of the Federation is to secularise all State institutions, and, on the eve of the general election the result of which may strongly influence the future for many years, it calls on all who sympathise with that aim to forget their quarrels and unite in an attempt to establish a genuine democratic and secular State in France.

In the international field the Federation considered that the belligerent policy of the United States, was inspired, not merely by hostility to a political ideology, but also to a materialist philosophy; and the Pentagon, by its interference in different parts of the globe, particularly in Vietnam, had become a danger to world peace. Religions, limited by their doctrines and institutions, were incapable of solving with justice and humanity the urgent problems of today; the Federation therefore appealed to all like-minded persons to co-operate with it in an effort to advance good and humane measures which aim at world-wide

peace, freedom of thought and one happy co-existence of peoples.

The foreign congressists and those French who were particularly interested held several discussions as to the best ways of collaborating, and hailed the establishment of an information service with warm approval. President Jean Cotereau re-elected, stressed in his closing address the great need for close co-operation, and reminded his hearers of the International Congress to be held in London early next September.

The Annual Conference of Progressive Esperantists (SAT) took place at Karlsruhe, Haus der Gewerkschaften, and included a veritable international Freethought gathering as 35 members of the Freethought section were present. Though from seven different countries they discussed their problems in a single language; exchanging information as to the Freethought situation in the several lands, e.g. church taxation, formalities required to leave a church, cremation and burial, including the recent American "refrigeration" of the dead. On account of another meeting Germany was not strongly represented, though there was present Josef Burger of Essen, well known as a poet and ever cheerful.

"CRUEL MORALIST"

MRS. DAPHNE MCCARTHY, wife of the founder of the Moral Law Defence Association, Dillon McCarthy, has been granted a decree on grounds of cruelty. Mr. McCarthy, whose Association is strongly opposed to divorce, was described by the judge as an unusual type of man; virtually all his life was spent within a room, sleeping by day and staying awake at night (*South London Press*, 2/11/65). In the eyes of the law he was a cruel man, said the judge. The case had been listed as Mr. McCarthy's petition for restitution of conjugal rights, but he did not attend court. He did, however, submit a 60-page sworn statement. In 1961, the Moral Law Association organised a group of "vigilantes" to clean up bookshops.

CORRESPONDENCE

CHRISTMAS

A reader asks for suggestions for an appropriate non-Christian Christmas greeting. What about "Merry Solstice Celebrations"?

OTTO WOLFGANG

Reading through the list of names of those who write so regularly and so well for *Freethought* and *Humanist* publications. Breasting through the literary efforts of the trained minds, who are such a wealth of information on historical fact and who write as only those can who train for the task, I wonder, where do I, a poor and by comparison a semi-literate bus conductor come in?

What active part can I take in the Humanist movement, if literary qualifications and affluence must be the standard? It has been said that Humanism must come from the top, downwards, from the intellectuals down to the base semi-literates. Am I then to be debarred from playing my part in a movement which I have searched for over many years? Debarred until the intellectuals have had their fill?

I am an atheist because religion is a lie and because the basis of religions is the debasement of man and is the doctrine of fear. I want to see this fear removed from all men, that they may lead a full and happy life. I want desperately to do something concrete to stop such things as the proposed take-over bid for the Church of England by the Roman Catholics, and with it, of course, the "establishment." Terror and fear and torment lie in the wake of this cunning move.

I don't want to write about sex. It is important, but is not top priority for an active atheist. I don't want to write about homosexuality; his problem can be resolved later. I don't want to denigrate parsons and bishops nor to mock and scoff at what

others believe. I want to see a code of conduct preached by atheists which is not the doctrine of fear but is the dignity of man.

I believe that the process of the evolution of man is still going on; the most important thing today to assist that process, is to abandon the debasing effects of religion. Evolution will be stifled, whilst fear and mysticism and God-worship last. We shall never prove our claims, or attain our aims until we stop "muck-slugging" and put forward a concrete code of conduct and the basis of a new morality, which we can offer and prove to be more satisfying and more effective than any religion.

We are the pioneers of a new era in social life and social reform. Let us put forward a new morality, founded on rationalism and secularism. This way lies dignity and the deletion of fear. Surely, somewhere, someone will lead us.

KENNETH J. EAD

OBITUARY

Fred Pain, who died in London on October 27th, was a member of the National Secular Society and a *FREETHINKER* reader for many years. He was a quiet and unassuming man who held his views with deep conviction; and despite poor health he frequently attended meetings and other functions. He also enjoyed music and was a keen theatregoer.

The funeral took place at Mortlake Crematorium on November 2nd, and was attended by the following NSS members: Messrs. H. Cleaver, F. A. Ridley, W. McIlroy, R. Sproule and Mrs. E. Wynants. The late Mr. Pain was a widower and is survived by his two sons (now living in Australia) and a daughter, to whom our sympathy is extended.

THE ENGLISH SUNDAY

Distraught on a fat Sunday
the she-rat runs abroad
where enemies may shoulder-gun for ducks
(talk about religion and
more buttons in the bank).
And then she's glad to see again her man
back of the sunset.

OSWELL BLAKESTON

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The Freethinker

JAN 4 1966

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At the time of the first Vatican Council which, on July 18th, 1870, proclaimed the infallibility of the Pope as an article of faith, a book was issued under the title of *The Pope and the Council*. The author was a leading Catholic scholar, Ignatius von Dollinger, a German professor from Munich, and his express purpose was to oppose the attempt then being made at the Vatican Council to proclaim a dogma of personal infallibility. His attempt failed, for the Jesuits and their allies amongst whom the English Cardinal Manning was conspicuous eventually over-ruled the famous decree through the Council with only two dissentients (one of them an American). Professor von Dollinger himself eventually submitted, but a number of his followers formed an Old Catholic Church which still exists.

The argument put forward against papal infallibility by the German professor was not a rationalistic one. Had it been so, von Dollinger would presumably have left the Church! It was, in the main, an historical one; for historians of the first Vatican Council tend to ignore that the authentic conservatives in the Church of Rome were not the supporters, but the opponents of papal infallibility. Prior to 1870 the vast majority of Catholic authorities had confined infallibility in faith and in morals solely to the general councils of the Church, which were only held at intervals of centuries.

General Councils v. The Pope

The first universally recognised general council of the Church was held at Nicaea in 325 in the reign of the first Christian emperor, Constantine, who was actually present. The last one before 1870 was the Council of Trent which launched the Catholic Counter-Reformation in the mid-sixteenth century. Prior to the infallibility decree, von Dollinger had no difficulty at all in demonstrating, had been the unvarying belief of the Church since at least the 4th century, that only the collective decisions in faith and morals made by universally recognised General Councils were to be regarded as infallible. The individual pope was not regarded as infallible in his own papal capacity; he could even be lawfully deposed by the superior power of a General Council of the Church, as he actually was at the Council of Constance (1416) only a century before the Reformation.

So universally was this fact recognised, that a Catholic apothecism issued in England around 1800 declared that papal infallibility was merely a Protestant calumny. And a Bavarian professor, Adam Mahler, in his famous book, *Symbolism*, described papal infallibility as *ipso facto*, a Protestant belief which subordinated the collective judgment of the Catholic Church to the mere private judgment of an individual pope, an argument which upon Catholic premises appears to be logically unanswerable. For the Church, as such, is superior to any of its individual members. (Mahler, incidentally, died before the meeting of the first Vatican Council).

However, the dogma of papal infallibility was rushed

through the Vatican Council by a heterogeneous alliance of Manning and his persuasive Jesuit allies; and Newman's theory of development—unlike older theories—gave the Church power to define new dogmas which had previously been minority opinions. Since 1870 it is an official dogma that the Pope is the Church.

From 1870-1961, the period between the beginning of the first and the end of the second Vatican Council, has seen the high water-mark of papal power. For throughout this near-century, the Pope has been the undisputed and unlimited ruler of the Church; in actuality, the Pope was the Church. When the Pope spoke, the Church spoke! and when the Pope kept silence—even a shameful silence like that of Pius XII over the gas-chambers of the Nazi Third Reich—again the whole Church kept silent.

Council v. Curia

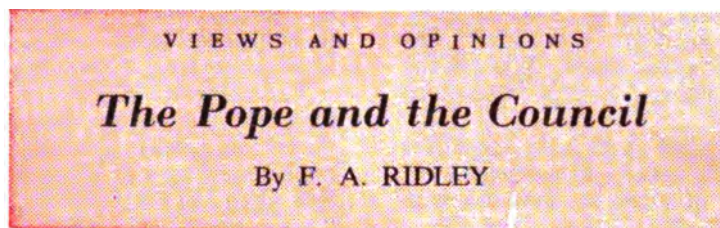
However, if the first Vatican Council proclaimed the infallibility of the pope (and thereby committed ecclesiastical suicide by making itself superfluous), it looks at present as if the second Vatican Council is beginning, if not to abolish the dogma (which would be technically impossible on Catholic premises, since the Holy Spirit who inspired the original proclamation in 1870 cannot err!) at least to whittle it down substantially in current and future practice.

For what is perhaps the most important decree now accepted by both Pope and Council and consequently now embodied in Canon Law, provides for the permanent establishment of a senate or council of bishops from all over the world to advise the Pope.

This is (or at any rate could be) a most important innovation, even a revolutionary step. For at least since 1870, the government of the world-wide Church has been rigidly centred in the Vatican, in the papal Curia which, like all long-established bureaucracies, tends to be traditional, unimaginative and intensely conservative. In recent years, for example, the main opposition to Pope John's "papal revolution" came from the Roman Curia, led by Cardinal Ottaviani. The non-Italian bishops, the vast majority both in the Council and in the Church at large, are reputed to have long groaned under the rule of the Roman Curia. Hence the importance of the decree constituting the episcopal senate; far more important than the much-publicised, but actually meaningless, piece of verbiage absolving the Jews from their alleged crime of deicide—for killing a hypothetical diety at an unknown place and date.

Papal Infallibility and the Second Vatican Council

The proposed creation of an episcopal senate in which Italians will presumably be outnumbered by foreign prelates, unquestionably marks an important step for the Church. For it may well come in time to modify, or even at length to supersede, the virtual dictatorship of the Roman bureaucracy, predominantly Italian and conservative hitherto centred in Vatican City. It may even



in time come to fill the role of ecclesiastical parliament, with the national churches nominating their bishops—a long step from medieval autocracy to the modern analogy of constitutional government in secular states.

What bearing will this perhaps far-reaching decree have upon the future of the Papacy itself? Surely, a profound one. For infallibility is incompatible with any form of co-existence. Hence, in time, we may see the gradual re-emergence of something like the pre-1870 General Councils, which effectively shared power and even infallibility with the Papacy. It will perhaps be eventually seen that

the former Franciscan monk, Fr. Anthony, who lived to become an eminent rationalistic critic of his former Church, Joseph McCabe, was not only an accurate historian of the Papacy but also an accurate prophet of its future. At the turn of this century, McCabe (in his *Twelve Years in a Monastery*) predicted that, by its end, the President of the Catholic Church would bear the same relationship to Leo XIII (then Pope), as the future Socialist President of the German Republic in 2000 AD would do to the then autocratic Kaiser, Wilhelm II! Things appear to be shaping that way at Rome.

Window on the World

By OTTO WOLFGANG

TIMES CHANGE—as the Latin adage had it. Even religion, which strives to be an exception to this general rule, has from time to time to make some concessions. Without the addition of new and viable contents, ancient institutions become empty, ludicrous rituals.

Take for instance the Freemasons—now a meeting place of reactionary busybodies, social snobs and others who, for lack of a proper goal in life, remain romantic and immature.

The Americans—according to the French the only people who never reached the state of civilisation but slipped from barbarism into decadence—turned even Freemasonry into a mass movement with noisy street processions and all the showbiz paraphernalia possible.

In a special article *Le Nouvel Observateur* (September 15th) gives the number of Freemasons in the world as six million, of which about five million alone are in the USA. Most of the American presidents were members and Gordon Cooper, the cosmonaut, carried into the stratosphere a blue masonic pennant—which is now exhibited and kept as a trophy by his Lodge. In this country, many members of Royalty (among them Prince Philip) and the Church dignitaries are Freemasons. Once when the movement had a progressive content, the Vatican persecuted it with satanic hatred; now that it has become respectable and tame (or, should we say, senile?) bridges have been built. The Holy See is now prepared to give its benediction provided the Freemasons refrain from being a competitive Church, drop the bombastic address to the "Sublime Architect of the Universe," and revert to the simpler old term "God."

The October issue of the *Churchman* deals with "The Role of Churches in Politics" and "Peace in Vietnam." It acknowledges in an editorial that politics permeate everything in our lives, therefore it has "never been possible completely to segregate religion and politics"; nor has it been possible to "keep religion out of all state activities." With regard to religion in schools, it goes on:

It would be well to remember that in the 1830s religious instruction was discontinued in the New York public schools because of the protests of Roman Catholics and Baptists! The Roman Church objected to the use of the King James Bible, the Baptists because the pupils were not taught they were sinners who needed salvation!

On September 9th, the Bishop of California, James A. Pike, accused of heresy by some Arizona clergy, was absolved by the Episcopal House of Bishops. To the charge that "he repudiated our Lord's Virgin birth," he answered that, according to the official reports of the Commission appointed by the Archbishops of York and Canterbury, literal belief in the nativity story was not obligatory. To the charge that he denied the bodily resurrection and ascension story, his answer was that only

a "spiritual body" could be meant since the "ascension in any other terms would be an incongruity in a post-Copernican view of the universe."

The *Saturday Review* of September 11th complained that "the budget for the space programme which is supported on military grounds" is \$2 billion more than the total annual cost of all educational costs in the USA, and less than \$1,000,000,000 is appropriated now for the "great war" against poverty, as against \$50,000,000,000 put annually into defence.

Dr. H. Gough, English-born Archbishop of Sydney, welcomed the stirrings inside the Anglican Church because it revealed a revolt from the complacency and self-satisfaction of the past. It is true that revolutions may get out of hand but, he said, perhaps "the greatest need of the Church of Christ to-day is to relate its doctrines, its worship, its customs to the problems of the 20th century. The trouble is that the Church tends to live as if this were the 16th or 17th century instead of the 20th" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, September 7th). In Ghana they have gone the opposite way. A new publication in London to further the struggle of African immigrants in this country, *Crisis and Change*, of October 15th, quoted from the Ghana *Evening News* a report how during a heavy rainstorm "the Osagyefo, the son of God and the Holy One appeared . . . he looked up as if in prayer, and behold! a miracle happened." Slowly but surely the rain ceased, the sun came out, the crowd became happy "and with the presence of the Holy One, they danced and sang more vigorously than ever . . . Kwame, the Holy Messenger of the Almighty, had done it again!"

Der Spiegel on July 27th carried a special article on conditions in Israel. There also exists a colour problem between the whites, who occupy all the dominant positions, and their coloured brethren who not only are uneducated but resent sending their domestic help (i.e., their own children) to school unless paid for this loss of labour. Another problem is the fanatical religious minority who must be appeased for the sake of financial help from US Jewry.

The Army as a state institution is compelled to give religious instruction (of 500 classes there are 65 on scriptures); the Sabbath and kosher laws must be strictly kept with all the 613 dos and don'ts of the canon. At 6 pm on Friday until next day 6 pm the Sabbath reigns supreme; there is no railway or air service, no public convenience is open, and even tourists who—to the annoyance of the orthodox minorities—can still land their foreign planes on Tel Aviv airfield, have to be satisfied with cold snacks in their rooms. On this day of wrath the zealots would not even call the ambulance or fire

(Concluded on page 388)

Is All Matter Aware?

By DOUGLAS BRAMWELL

"LIFE" and "thought" mark two important stages in the development of matter. In the course of evolution non-living matter becomes organised in increasingly complicated ways until it begins to feed, to move and to reproduce; to show, in fact, the behaviour patterns that we associate with life. By further development this living matter becomes organised into organisms of increasing complexity until it begins to think.

Philosophies that take evolution seriously—and these include naturalism, emergence and Marxism—have paid a great deal of attention to the problems posed by this sequence of development in matter. The similar organisational dependence of life on matter and matter on life, has led to neglect, in these philosophies, of an important, indeed categorical, difference between life and thought.

Robots That Think?

This difference can be brought out by considering an experiment that might be carried out by one of those "round the bend" scientists of the popular horror film. Let us suppose that in his laboratory he were to construct an unthinking robot from synthetic materials that looked exactly like human tissue. Suppose, too, that the robot behaved exactly like a human being, including making statements about fictitious "thoughts." If this robot were then released into society it would not be possible to detect that it was devoid of thought. It would be accepted as human in all respects.

If it is suggested that a machine behaving so much like a human being must, in fact, have thoughts, another interesting experiment can be suggested. It is theoretically possible for an electronic machine to be constructed to simulate many activities of the human brain, and as the brain becomes more adequately understood it will become possible for machines to simulate more and more of its functions. To equip such an electronic brain with walking and talking facilities so as to allow it to act like an organism is an easy task for a competent engineer. Now, in the light of the above possible objection, would such a machine be said to think? We must not allow the difference of appearance and construction to influence us too much: thought may not be confined to creatures constructed on the basis of the carbon compounds.

The point behind these two grotesque examples is to show that it is never possible to be sure that thought is occurring in other entities. In turn this illustrates the categorical difference between life and thought. What we call "life" is a pattern of behaviour observed in our own and other material bodies. Thought, on the other hand, is not an observable pattern of behaviour: the only thought that I can experience is my own; the existence of thought in other organised material systems can only be inferred from their behaviour. I hear other people talk and see them behave as though they are having thoughts like my own; I therefore infer that they are, in fact, having such thoughts.

Atoms that are aware?

The neglect of the categorical difference between life and thought has probably been due to the fact that the philosophies of evolution originated in the 19th century when conscious thought was widely taken to be the only form of experience. Since then psychology and psychiatry have made us aware of levels of experience below consciousness, and it is now widely accepted that some

form of unconscious awareness could be a common property of all living matter.

Such an unconscious awareness would vary in its complexity and organisation to match the structure and specialisation of the organs of perception and integration of the organism concerned. At the level of the single-celled animal or plant, where no specialised nerve tissues are present, awareness would perhaps be vague and uniform throughout the whole of the organism.

However complex or however simple the unconscious experience of an organism might be it would, like conscious thought, be impossible to detect directly. Like thought, it could only be postulated as a result of inferences from the behaviour of the organism. Let us pursue this undetectable quarry a little further.

There seems, today, to be considerable doubt as to what is alive and what is not.

The whole class of *viruses* comprises non-cellular creatures whose behaviour and properties place them squarely across the frontiers of the living and the inert. Chemically, they represent simple associations of proteins and nucleic acids. They can be analysed and synthesised, extracted and dried, just like the most undoubted inorganic crystals; and, if they were never known except in that form, one would not hesitate to label them as "inorganic" and "inert." Yet, if placed within a host-cell, they exploit the new environment, and multiply themselves just as though they—rather than the original nucleus—were the focal objects directing the activities of the living cell: in this capacity one is compelled to accept them as the simplest type of parasitic organism. So the distinction between living and non-living things can no longer be drawn in *material* terms. What marks them from one another is not the stuff of which they are made: the contrast is rather one between systems whose organisation and activities differ in complexity. If we are free to think of cell-parts as species of giant molecules, we may think of individual atoms as extremely simple organisms.*

Is there an elementary form of awareness in that virus which cannot make up its mind whether it is alive or not? And what of those yet smaller organisms—the atoms? If, as the quotation above indicates, it is now difficult to draw a firm line between the living and the inert, then it is equally difficult to divide the aware from the not-aware. Some basic experience may be present at the level of the molecule, the atom, or even the electron.

The suggestion here is not, it must be emphasised, that an electron thinks or has complex unconscious experience like a highly organised animal. It is simply that the most elementary equivalent to a thought or an experience might be present—a mere trace of subjective awareness. This subjective side of an electron would be as different from human thought as its observable physical side is different from the human body. The physical unity of the human body is something over and above the particles that make it up; likewise human thought, as the subjective aspect of that unity, would be something over and above the subjective aspects of the constituent particles.

Conclusions—none!

There have been a number of philosophers who have advocated that the universe is homogeneous in the sense that, through and through, from the particle to the man, everything has both an objective side that can be observed and a subjective side that cannot. They have held that it is not possible for totally non-aware matter to begin to be aware at a certain level of organisation: impossible, that is, for a categorically new aspect of matter to be added at a certain stage in its development. High

(Concluded on page 388)

This Believing World

WE WERE informed on one of the religious broadcasts for children the other day that the way Jesus tackled a problem was very different from the way mere mortals faced it. In John (9, 1) we were told that he saw a man "blind from birth," and his disciples wanted to know what he had done, or what his parents had done, "that he was born blind?" Jesus did not waste time in dealing with any "speculations" of this kind. He immediately cured the man. That is how "our Lord" acted at once. But what the teacher did not say was that the cure was due to a miracle. Given miraculous powers one could cure all ills. In fact, Jesus could have cured every blind man in one go. Why didn't he?

★

SLAVERY IS as rife as ever, according to Mr. Douglas Glover, the Chairman of the Anti-Slavery Society (*The Observer*, 7/11/65). The slave spots are in Asia and Africa, and it is reputed that there are "over one million slaves in the world today" in what is ironically called the "free world." The Anti-Slavery Society "has knowledge of cases in 20 countries," and reminds us that only 62 out of the 117 States in the UN have signed for the abolition of slavery.

★

DR. STOCKWOOD, the Bishop of Southwark, has just returned from a visit to Germany, where he found that "the practice of religion was slightly higher than in this country," as it no doubt was even during the Hitler regime. In particular, the Bishop was "deeply impressed" by a Roman Catholic Church in West Berlin (*South London Press*, 5/11/65) which "commemorates the hundreds of Christian martyrs who were killed by the Nazis." "Hundreds" in his connection is a perfect key word.

★

THE WELL-KNOWN journalist Bernard Levin has been doing a trip round the world for the *Daily Mail*, and in his article on November 8th he discourses valiantly in favour of the "Gideon Bibles" he found in so many hotels. They were all there—quite free—if never read. And if such a Bible has done nothing else, he remarks, "it must at any rate have saved many visitors from going raving mad from boredom . . ."

★

MANY CLAIMS have been made for the Bible—but boredom is surely about the last thing it is likely to cure. We would ask Mr. Levin if he could find anything whatever more boring than huge parts of, say, Leviticus, Zedakhiah, or Obadiah? Does anybody, alone in a strange country hotel, go to the Hebrew prophets for enjoyment? Did they write to entertain anybody?

★

LORD DONALD SOPER, a former president of the Methodist Conference, was greatly shocked at Dr. Ramsey's "armed intervention," if necessary, in Rhodesia (*London Evening News*, 27/10/65). The Roman Church, on the other hand, "officially supports Dr. Ramsey's view," as does the Rev. Nicolas Stacey. It seems, in fact, that the Churches are hopelessly divided on the issue. But what would Jesus have done? Nobody knows, or cares two hoots!

WINDOW ON THE WORLD

(Concluded from page 386)

brigade. Mixed marriages are banned, some couples get married abroad (in Cyprus for instance) and have some trouble on returning to get legal recognition of the marriage. So long as the country is not self-supporting but dependent on assistance from US Jewry there can be no question of separation of state and church, and the rabbinical tribunal is on the way to becoming another Vatican.

The latest battle between the modernist and fundamentalist sections of the Ecumenical Council rages about whether "the body and blood of Christ are really present in the consecrated bread and wine of the mass, or whether they are present in the Eucharist only in a symbolical sense" (*Public Opinion*, Jamaica, October 8th). The Pope in a recent Encyclical came down heavily on the conservative side, whilst the reformist wing is mostly represented by the Dutch, who "have relations not only with Protestant sects but also with atheistic movements."

IS ALL MATTER AWARE?

(Concluded from page 387)

level awareness and conscious thought must be developments from something already present, in an elementary form, in elementary matter.

Because experience, at all levels from conscious thought down, is totally undetectable and can only be inferred, the suggestion of awareness in elementary matter is totally valueless for science. If no scientific experiment or observation can detect whether or not a human being or a robot is having experiences, still less can science tell us whether an electron has a subjective aspect.

The suggestion is, however, relevant to metaphysical philosophy. For naturalism and the evolutionary philosophies it would eliminate the difficulty of explaining how experience arises, out of nothing, part way through evolution. There would be no need to use such lame-duck ideas as the doctrine of emergence.

The suggestion might also be of use in argument against those theists who bring in God to explain the supposed sharp differences between the human "soul" and the animal mind, and between animal minds and inanimate matter. If we can deny these sharp differences we undermine their need for God.

This article has reached no firm conclusions. Indeed, it is difficult to see how conclusions can ever be reached in an area so inherently immune to experimental exploration. But if the argument leads to a doubt or two on questions to which everyone seems certain of their answers, it will have more than served its purpose.

• *The Architecture of Matter*, S. Toulmin and J. Goodfield. Hutchinson, 1962; Penguin, 1965.

DAVID TRIBE ON TV

Mr. David Tribe, President of the National Secular Society, appeared in the programme *Week In, Week Out* (BBC Television, Welsh Region), on Friday, November 19th. He discussed religion in schools with Dr. F. H. Hilliard, Reader in Religious Education, University of London.

Mr. Tribe is the author of *Religion and Ethics in Schools* which was recently published by the National Secular Society, price 1s. 6d., and will be reviewed next week by Margaret Knight.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

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Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group (Regency House, Oriental Place), Sunday, December 5th, 5.30 p.m.: DANIEL SNOWMAN, "Religion in the USA."

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, December 5th, 6.30 p.m.: T. K. MUKHERJEE, "India and the West."

Marble Arch Branch NSS (Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1), Sunday, December 5th, 7.30 p.m. Speaker: F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT. Subject to be announced.

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1), Sunday, December 5th, 11 a.m.: Dr. E. A. SEELEY, "The Humanist Approach to Social Problems." December 7th, 7.30 p.m.: EDA COLLINS, "Can we be Rational about Sex?"

Notes and News

THERE IS, as Mrs. Avril Fox, of Harlow, has said, "a strong need for people to speak out against the strange puritanism of the Clean-Up TV Campaign with its known affinities with Moral Re-armament" (*The Observer*, 21/11/65). Mrs. Fox and the supporters of her Movement for Enlightened TV do not believe that there is excessive sex or violence on television, and they consider the standard of BBC programmes has improved since Sir Hugh Greene became Director-General. Their only regret is that the Corporation sometimes takes a step forward only to retreat later with an apology . . . that it sometimes wavers in its convictions as soon as they are challenged by a vociferous minority." There was no need, Mrs. Fox said, for it to apologise for Kenneth Tynan's four-letter word, "because the BBC accepts the desirability of live television and that word was used in a completely sensible context."

TAR TOO much publicity has been given to Mrs. Mary Whitehouse's absurd allegations of a BBC conspiracy to corrupt and undermine the country's morals. Mrs. Fox hopes to build up a nation-wide committee whose aim will be to provide some consistent opposition to the Clean-Up TV Campaign, and we wish her Movement every success. Her address is 23 Glebelands, Harlow, Essex.

THE ROMAN Catholic Church must—in spite of its motto—change in order to survive. Plans for the reform of the Curia are well under way, the Pope has told the Vatican Council, and the Holy Office is soon to be reorganised. When the reorganisation takes place, the 75-year-old arch-conservative, Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, is expected to retire (*The Sunday Times*, 21/11/65). Head of the Holy Office for many years, the Cardinal has fought a rearguard battle against all the Council's attempted reforms. It was a sign of the times that another Cardinal should accuse the Holy Office of trying and convicting persons without trial, and of acting not very differently from the way it did in the days of the Inquisition.

NOT THAT the "progressives" are having things all their own way at the Council. And many bishops, the *Daily Telegraph* reported (18/11/65), are "becoming increasingly concerned they may go home without any statement by the Pope on birth control." Bishop Hengsbach, of Essen, speaking on behalf of another commission, told the Council that he did not want to prejudice the report of the Pope's special commission on birth control. It is clear from the Bishop's statement, the *Telegraph* said, that, until the special commission has reported and the Pope has spoken, "the rules on birth control as laid down by Pius XI and Pius XII still prevail."

TWO DAYS earlier (16/11/65) the *Guardian's* Rome correspondent, George Armstrong, announced that the "Papal pill commission" had not met since March, and had not submitted any new evidence to Pope Paul, "contrary to reports published . . . in the United States." A prominent member of the special commission said, however, that he hoped the Pope would say something soon. "The parish priest must be told what practical advice he can give married couples when they ask him about the pill. Something can be said now, and I hope the Pope will speak, whether using our findings or not."

AS FAR as Pope Paul is concerned, however, announcements to help the parish priest and his parishioner must take second place to those on the beatification of Pius XII and John XXIII. There has, the *Sun* informs us (19/11/65), been "a great popular clamour for Pope John to be made a saint"; and, theological considerations apart, the last Pope did seem to be a good or virtuous man. But Pius XII is—in the *Sun's* words—"a more controversial figure." The image of the "Pope of Peace," first attacked by Freethinkers, is now badly tarnished. The Devil's Advocate should, in fact, have an easy task.

ON NOVEMBER 21st, in *Horizon*, BBC 2 gave us a profile of the Hungarian scientist, Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, Nobel prizewinner, for his discovery of Vitamin C; later noted for his muscle research, and now—at 72—engaged on isolating a substance which inhibits natural cell growth, thereby causing cancer. Szent-Gyorgyi cannot regard science as non-moral (he emphasises the honesty involved in its pursuit) and strongly supports the peace movement. He is not religious and believes (*The Observer*, 21/11/65) that there is no inherent meaning in life, though man has had to put meaning into it."

LORD SILKIN'S Abortion Bill was due to be debated in the House of Lords on Tuesday. Lord Iddlesleigh, a Roman Catholic, had put down an amendment to reject the Bill.

Not Waiting for Godot

(with apologies to Samuel Beckett)

By PHYLLIS K. GRAHAM

(HE'S here at last. The long-desired interview has been arranged. Spamme has been elected in place of Richard Dimpleby, probably because he looks ethereal and still retains a touch of choir-boy freshness. He is, in fact, eager, excited, but distinctly nervous.

In honour of the *Aggiornamento*—and possibly to console the 10,000 clergy condemned to their laborious chastity,—the Name of the Exalted Interviewee is rendered in Italian—as below.)

SPAMME

Am I correct in assuming, sir, that we can dispense with the formality of an opening prayer? Not, I assure you, out of any disrespect to your august Person and Presence. Simply that—well, I've become a little rusty about such matters . . . I'm sure you'll understand . . .

GODOTTI

(affably) Not at all, not at all, my dear Spamme. To tell you the truth I should find it a refreshing change to be addressed—for once—without the vocative O. The human maw presented like the mouth of a drainpipe does become a little monotonous at times.

SPAMME

But you do enjoy being serenaded? Musically, I mean?

GODOTTI

(shrugging) Well, it's an old human custom, certainly. Rather played out, though. "New Every Morning" at ten-fifteen *every* morning almost approaches the farcical, don't you think? And all those grotesque human mugs on your telly-screen . . . gaping in unison like gaffed fish . . . ugh! There's still some good stuff in the Cathedrals, though. I'll admit to a partiality for plainchant.

SPAMME

More appropriate to your dignity, certainly. But I'm relieved to know that we can cut out the preamble. May I take it that, for the purpose of this friendly discussion, the gulf between us is temporarily non-existent? That we can talk man to man, as it were, without reservation?

GODOTTI

Why—ah—certainly—provided, of course, that you don't become too—ah—embarrassing. There are limits, you know.

SPAMME

To what, though? If we're going to deal with the illimitable (yourself, I presume) and the all but limitless relations of man to yourself and the universe and life in general . . .

GODOTTI

Good heavens! My dear chap, what a programme! I really don't think I'm equal to it—at this stage of my career. There's been too much of all that—far too much, I'd say—for the last couple of thousand years. Can't you ease off a bit—get on to something a little less—well, harrowing?

SPAMME

What, for instance?

GODOTTI

Well. . .

Look here, my boy, I'll be frank with you from the

start. I'd like to emerge from the clouds of Sinai for a breather. Being a Mystery palls, you know, in a thousand or so generations. It's not much fun being worshipped with the same old tripe year in year out, by the same old herds with never an original idea among 'em. How would you like it?

SPAMME

Er—I hardly know, it's completely beyond my experience.

GODOTTI

Exactly. And that's why I have to endure it. Nobody's got the guts to think himself in my place and find out just how deadly boring the whole situation is.

SPAMME

I say, I'd no idea how much you had to put up with. I'm awfully sorry.

GODOTTI

Decent of you.

SPAMME

But may I remind you there are at least a few of us who don't run with the herd? Some of us haven't been to church or uttered a prayer since—

GODOTTI

Since you found out the truth—that I'm a Humbug?

SPAMME

(faintly) . . . You quite overwhelm me, sir. I wasn't prepared to employ such a devastating description.

GODOTTI

Hang it all, man, don't drivel. I thought you wanted a patch of plain speaking.

SPAMME

Y-yes, I do, sir . . . it's just—well, a bit sudden. You've taken the wind out of my sails, so to speak.

GODOTTI

Saved you the trouble of a blasphemous argument, you mean. I tell you, my boy, I'm through with the whole corny business. I've been whittled away and vapourised till I don't know whether I'm coming or going . . . and they *still* expect me to snuff up incense, gobble up prayers, wallow in amatory worship: in short, sit up there like a moron with nothing to do but bask in a lot of ecclesiastical bally-hoo.

SPAMME

You sound—if I may venture to say so, sir—astonishingly bitter about this regrettable state of affairs.

GODOTTI

Bitter! Not on your life. Gall is concerned with reality: you should know that. What I'm speaking of is pure farce. And what I mean is, any sort of show gets boring after a time—brings on exasperation. Makes me dive for the open air—anywhere away from masks and antics and artificiality.

SPAMME

Yes. I can sympathise there. I chucked the whole thing up because I felt asphyxiated.

GODOTTI

Precisely. And now, my dear fellow, having established, as it were, a mutual understanding, we can

go ahead. In my opinion—and no doubt in yours too—this “Honest-to-God” piffle comes off as a dead flop. I propose to follow it up with a spectacular “Honest-to-Man.”

PAMME

My God!

Oh, I beg your pardon. I—I'm shattered. I'd absolutely no idea you could be so—sporting, sir. The idea is simply great. It's what I'd like more than anything but wouldn't have dared to hope for.

GODOTTI

Well, now you've got it, straight from the horse's mouth. Or—to be more exact—from the ape's skull.

PAMME

... I beg your pardon?

GODOTTI

(irritably) *Don't* beg. That's the second time you've done it. I've stopped pardoning and all that stuff. I can't stand any more “miserable sinners.”

PAMME

Oh—yes, of course... I only mean't—I didn't quite follow your meaning. About—the animal you mentioned...

GODOTTI

Oh, that. Well, does it surprise you, boy?

PAMME

You mean... I hardly dare to formulate in my mind—

GODOTTI

Come, come, now, why so much maidenly confusion? You knew you were a primate, didn't you?

PAMME

Well—yes, of course, sir: I know my Darwin and—and all that's happened since. But—I—I don't quite see how that affects you, sir... I mean—

GODOTTI

Nothing complicated in it. The primate family has primate gods. Naturally.

PAMME

(after a stupified pause) D'you mind taking over, sir? This is more than I can cope with.

GODOTTI

You want me to make a speech, eh, while you get your wind back. All right, I will. A short one, straight from the shoulder.

Now then, you lords of the earth who owe your lordship to your squat pelvis—what d'you think you know about making gods? Gods, indeed. I'll admit you've accomplished a certain amount since you got off your front paws, sharpened your snout and started to use your loaf: namely, a reasonable minimum of progress plus an irrational maximum of mischief. In fact, senior primate or no, you're still very much involved with your poor relations. Your common ancestry's hung around your neck like a bell on a cat's collar. As one of your sager scribes put it, “The substance of man is ape still.”

Now consider: these Objects of worship you've been creating for yourself, ever since you first felt the need to propitiate Something, and the urge to rationalise it into Someone... what sort of stuff could they be made of? Out of ape-substance cometh forth ape, *n'est-ce pas?* That's logic, biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, *et al*—and a cul-de-sac for philosophy. Got your breath back, my dear fellow?

SPAMME

I—still—feel—a little faint. I was quite unprepared, you see, for such a revelation. I mean, coming from yourself. I must admit the idea had occurred to me, in a general way: but your enunciation of it, with such remarkable candour, puts the whole thing on a—well, personal plane. It's rather a shock.

GODOTTI

You'll get over it. As soon as your numbed faculties start work again you'll begin to see quite a lot of light.

SPAMME

Y—yes. It's dawning already. The—er—ape-theology, if I may so term it, might explain a lot of things that puzzle and perturb the non-conforming mind.

GODOTTI

You've said it. Now sit quiet and relax and let your imagination run riot. Just bumble all around the whole subject like a honey-bee. You can ask me any questions you like.

SPAMME

You're being awfully kind and accommodating, sir. I appreciate that. But—I can't help feeling you've taken the whole situation out of my hands. Your—ah—admission has in no way lessened your assumption of authority—

GODOTTI

Why the hell should it? I'm your boss still, you know, even if I am a self-confessed Humbug. Apes can't expect to get quit of apishness, now can they? Stands to reason.

SPAMME

But—look here, sir, we can't go on from this. If you're just a hoax, it's futile asking questions. And I'm not a mere ape, I'm a man, which is considerably more.

GODOTTI

More apish, you mean? Quite possibly. Ultra-apishness is a common symptom throughout your species. But don't let that worry you. Accept it as a beautiful proof of the Brotherhood of Man.

SPAMME

(perilously near to tears) I thought this was to be a solemn and portentous interview. A great step onward for mankind. And now you go and... This cynical treatment of a sacred subject really *hurts* me. And there'll be the most ghastly public outcry. The BBC will be absolutely ruined.

GODOTTI

Rot. It'll do Auntie a world of good to have a clean sweep through. As for the public, they've had it coming to 'em for a mighty long time. And see here, young man: solemn and portentous I will not be, I've been stuck on the straight and narrow too long; why, I've never even had so much as a chuckle since the dear old gods of Olympus went down the drain. But if you're in any doubt as to this jolly interview being a “great step onward”—let me assure you it jolly well is. The senior primate hasn't had such a jolt since Darwin discovered the family tree. You see why? Don't you. Well, isn't it obvious?

SPAMME

(much agitated) Yes, yes, I know what you want me to say. But, oh sir, must it be said in public and on the air? Can't we leave people in peace with their—their happy illusions? What are they

going to feel—if they know that—that—(he breaks down completely).

GODOTTI

Well, of all the ninnies. Fancy him taking on like that. Really, the vanity of this species is the absolute limit.

(A moment of wild confusion in the TV studio as the directors hastily decide, divinity or no divinity, to terminate the interview. But a sort of spell falls on everyone as Godotti produces a bunch of bananas from his robe, picks out a splendid specimen and presses it into Spammie's nerveless hand, with the friendliest and most unselfconscious gesture. There is something about this that makes it the most moving and most significant moment of the entire occasion. Many eyes are now wet besides those of the unfortunate Spammie.)

GODOTTI

There, there, my good fellow, don't take it to heart so. Eat up that banana—food of the gods, y'know—and you'll see things differently. What you need is a far broader outlook—more tolerant, don't y'know, and cut out the squeamishness. What's wrong with being an ape, anyway? If I don't object to it, why should you? There's worse things than furry origins . . . but not much that's worse than high-faultin' snobbery. Which you humans suffer from pretty badly, I must say. However, your cure is beginning, and I'm out to see it through.

Have another banana, do . . .

(An extraordinary illusion supervenes on the final fade-out. The banana-charm has reduced the whole setting to a jungle dusk, wherein the two squat like happy buddies munching their ripe horns of plenty . . . a scene strongly reminiscent of Regent's Park tea-parties, yet undeniably profound with immortal significance . . .)

(To be concluded).

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CORRESPONDENCE

"THE PASSOVER PLOT"

Your contributor under the heading "This Believing World" in your issue of November 19th seems to have picked up his information about my book, *The Passover Plot* from a garbled and prejudiced review by an orthodox churchman published in *The Observer*.

If he had read the book himself, and in many respects it would have delighted him, he would have discovered that it does not answer to his description. In the first place it is a work of history, not theology, and fully explains the evidence of the manner in which Jesus came to be deified. Neither have I relied entirely on the Gospels. I have utilised all the available sources of information which throw light on the Christian story, and have given in English passages from the relevant documents, including of course the Dead Sea Scrolls.

On of the important points I have established is that the death of Jesus occurred in 36 AD, several years later than the traditional date, in the last year of Pilate's administration.

The statement of Dr. Parkes, which your contributor quoted, is a travesty of my argument, and ignores my detailed survey of the circumstances. My book was bound to be attacked by ardent Christians, and has in fact come in for quite venomous comments, some of them in anonymous letters by fanatics. The effect has been that the book is being bought by thousands of people who want the kind of information I have uniquely furnished. They have rightly ignored the accusation that I am attempting to undermine the Christian Faith by reviving nineteenth century Rationalism; but, believe me, there is plenty of fresh dynamite in "The Passover Plot."

(Dr.) HUGH J. SCHONFIELD

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WHATEVER VIEW one may take of the social or intellectual value and nature of either science or religion, no one can doubt that both have exercised—and I shall argue in the case of science will continue to exercise—an incalculable influence upon the tangled story of human evolution. Religion is, of course, by far the older of these two major rivals in human evolution. To be sure, it dates back to epochs coeval with the actual

origins of human civilisation, and even before then there was magic of both white and black shades. It is, in fact, a task of almost insuperable complexity to define exactly where magic ended and where religion began. Perhaps the earliest gods were the Pharaohs

of Egypt and their contemporary rulers in ancient civilisations. But however that may be, the phenomenon of religion as such, permits of a precise classification. All religions, from the most primitive to the most advanced, from the fetish rites of Benin and Dahomey, to the "highest" (chiefly Semitic) religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam (which is perhaps the best example extant of a "pure" religion, uncorrupted by metaphysical subtleties) present certain uniform characteristics and beliefs. They all involve belief in the supernatural, which they seek to propitiate; and they all involve belief in some future life beyond the grave, the details of which naturally conform to the degree of evolution attained by the particular religion involved, from the Happy Hunting Grounds of the Red Indian to the *summum bonum* of Jewish, Christian and Muslim mystics. These two phenomena, theism and immortality, are the unvarying accompaniments of every religious system historically recorded.

Why Religion?

Why, one must first inquire, did this hitherto permanent and recurring phenomenon first arise, and why has it endured for so long? To the convinced believer, of course, there is a ready and obvious reply to what lawyers would term a leading question. Religion is a special revelation of God, or of the gods, as the case may be. But to those who reject this too facile assumption, some alternative and more rational explanation must be sought. Nor is it in any way difficult to find such a non-supernatural explanation. For all religions ultimately stem from ignorance and fear. These naturally take many forms in accordance with varying degrees of social culture, and in particular ethical evolution, but they are always present in some shape or other. Early pre-scientific man dwelt in a strange and hostile universe which he could not understand, the frequently malignant controlling forces of which he naturally sought to propitiate by magical rites. In final analysis, the various theological systems evolved by successive cults represented more or less sophisticated attempts to comprehend the incomprehensible and to explain the inexplicable universe in which man found himself.

These early theological "explanations" of natural

phenomena were, of course, crude: geocentric and anthropocentric; the very opposite of scientific. Thus, for example, in the creation story best known in this part of the world, the Jewish book of Genesis, the author (or authors), having described in great—if in places conflicting—detail the origin and earthy adventures of the first man Adam—not to mention the serpent—added as a marginal afterthought that the creator "made the stars

also." The universe was much less important than man! It is this three-decker universe, this geocentric anthropocentric conception, that makes religion such an obvious anachronism in the universe being increasingly revealed by modern cosmology. And,

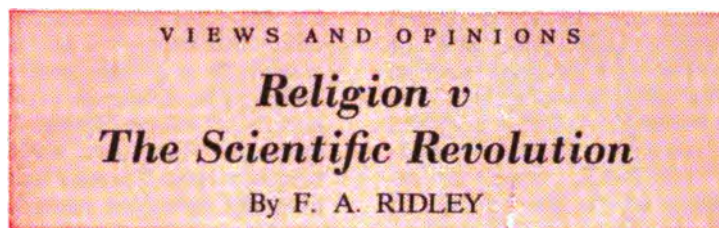
while theologians attempted to guess the origin and nature of the universe, practical religion sought to reconcile the great mass of men to the harsh and unhappy life which has, alas, been theirs in all ages prior to the scientific revolution.

For mankind in the mass has always lived under a scarcity economy in which the umbrella of social and economic security only sheltered successive ruling classes and castes (including the priestly hierarchies who have usually preached poverty vicariously). Throughout all human evolution to within living memory, the life of man has been (in the emphatic phrase of Thomas Hobbes), "nasty, brutish, and short." And if speculative theology indulged in pre-scientific guesswork regarding the origin and nature of the universe, its corollary, religion, sought to alleviate the harsh lot of humanity by preaching resignation to what were regarded as the necessary evils of man's mortal lot and (still more) by promising him a post-terrestrial life in compensation for his earthly sufferings and frustrations. One can perhaps state that both religion and theology were necessary and inevitable evils during the long pre-scientific era of social and intellectual immaturity.

The Origin of the Scientific Revolution

The scientific revolution is entirely incompatible with any and every form of religion. It, too, has a history, albeit a much shorter one than religion. As it is commonly understood, science may be said to have begun with the ancient Greeks about the 6th century BC, that "most wonderful of all centuries" as the late H. G. Wells once described it. From then on, the Greeks interpreted and systematically co-ordinated the random discoveries and speculations of earlier peoples, in particular the Egyptian and Chaldaean.

Most of the major modern sciences were founded by the Greeks, who also anticipated many modern discoveries: for example, 1,800 years before Galileo, Aristarchus of Samos advanced the heliocentric theory, whilst even the theory of evolution was anticipated by the Roman Epicurean, Lucretius. Under the combined impetus of Greek speculative genius and of Roman organisation, the classical civilisation by the beginning of our present era had reached the threshold of the Industrial Revolution:



Hero of Alexandria invented a rudimentary steam-engine, whilst the water-mill, invented about 100 BC revolutionised industry. That the ancient world never made the Industrial Age seems to have been principally due to two causes: the inability of the Greeks to evolve a practical technique corresponding with their speculative genius, a deficiency first noted by that "universal man," Leonardo da Vinci (himself one of the pioneers of the modern scientific revolution) and to the prevalence of chattel slavery, an institution too crude to handle advanced tools. As a result the classical industrial revolution failed, and classical science, along with the classical civilisation itself, ultimately perished in a sea of barbaric invasions and of Oriental superstitions.

The Modern Scientific Revolution

The modern, and to all present appearances permanent, scientific revolution began with the Italian Renaissance about 1500 and following Galileo's telescope (1609) eventually acquired the practical techniques, lack of which had frustrated the evolution of classical science. With the originally English Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, the scientific revolution acquired simultaneously a permanent foundation and an irresistible momentum. It is, in fact, only in this present generation that the scientific revolution can really be said to

have "broken through." In which connection we may quote the recent assertion of Sir Bernard Lovell, that one of every ten scientists in the history of human civilisation, nine are actually alive and at work today.

Beyond any room for doubt mankind has progressed in technical knowledge and material welfare farther and faster during our own lifetimes than in the whole of human evolution since the Pharaohs. One can in fact express the difference between our own civilisation and any earlier one, when we note that this is the first really scientific culture in human annals. In all earlier cultures, science had only a marginal place and value.

Science versus Religion

We now come to ask is any form of religion compatible with the contemporary scientific revolution? Obviously it is not. For theology guessed, and science corrected those guesses! Religion exists to console man for his frustration, which science will in time remove from this earth. For the social gospel of science is essentially a secular one. Finally, science demonstrates ethics to be a human product of which the universe and nature at large appear to be utterly and blissfully ignorant. For certainly no ethical deity such as all religions depict, could have made the amoral universe disclosed by modern cosmology.

Why Be Militant

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

A STRANGE notion is abroad that in their dealings with and approaches to, Christians, Freethinkers should moderate their tone and not be militant. Strange, because it does not accord with what any outstanding Freethinkers or Agnostics of the past have advocated or performed, nor has it any relation to the attitudes of the Christian Churches themselves.

The sort of thing I refer to is the remark sometimes heard that lectures, from a secular point of view in professedly secular assemblies, should not say anything to "put off" or offend Christians who may be present in the audience; or that when meeting Catholics one should not make references to the Inquisition, or express an opinion that their religion is dangerous and intolerant. Naturally on a social, a purely social occasion, no person with the modicum of manners would single out those who believe and think differently, and utter abuse of their cherished beliefs. But militancy is not to be confused with being rude, to hurt sincere opponents, or go out of one's way to rub such people up the wrong way. Indeed, the last would be extremely foolish, and Freethinkers too can remember with St. Francis de Sales that a "spoonful of honey catches more flies than a barrel of vinegar!" But bear in mind that I refer specifically to times when controversial views are purposely aired. How can people, fighting their way out from Christian entanglements (a painful process, as many of us have personal memories) know what secularism means if they do not get a clear and unequivocal statement of what it stands for from the few centres in this country that—professedly—deliberately propagate it.

If I go into a Catholic church I hear plain, unadulterated Catholic doctrine. Thunderings on divorce and birth control, views on censorship, the obscurantism of supernaturalism, may all offend me. I cannot complain. I need not have gone in there. Yet many a person who crept into a Catholic church during a thunderstorm, has ended

months later by being received into the Catholic Church. They are impressed, and it is psychologically significant, by the definiteness of the approach. If I move round the churches, of varying denominations of a big city, to sample the pure milk of doctrine in each, I will be let down if I am not dispensed the authentic savour. I do not expect them to merge into a grey nothingness.

He who seeks to please all, often ends by pleasing none. There is a world of difference between tempering the wind to the shorn lamb, and being woolly minded, and the truth is, many people's mincing of their words is only too certain an indication of an inner woolly-mindedness! No preacher, no lecturer, can hold in his mind, or gauge all the possible susceptibilities, all the peculiar prejudices of temperament and upbringing of every member of his audience. But it is perfectly possible to make it clear where one stands and yet observe the rules of dignified controversy. Plain speaking itself assists the formulation of ideas and forthright thinking, and vice-versa. It is a two-way come and go.

Many readers recall, in the late Mgr. Knox's *The Belief of Catholics*, his remark that toleration is only for Protestants, and not for Catholics, because they stand at the centre of God-given truth. The best that can be said of that remark is that it does not actively advocate positive persecution, burning at the stake, muzzlement, imprisonment. It almost certainly would not have done in amiable witty, donnish Ronnie Knox, in his rusty tweeds, but what of the hard lipped political ecclesiastic with the iron hand of discipline on himself and others? Three centuries of constitutional development, many foreign wars, and blood and toil, have won us our rights to utter all our various views, in a veritable Babel of opinions, and yet we hesitate to speak out our minds! Other generations, who had to flee beyond the seas before they might speak, would rightly upbraid our mealy-mouthed pullers of punches.

(Concluded on page 400)

Humanist Policy on "RI"

By MARGARET KNIGHT

HUMANIST organisations are of differing kinds. They range from the right-wing Ethical Union to the left-wing National Secular Society, and there are occasions when they seem hardly to be talking the same language. But on one issue at least they are unanimous. They would all like to see the 1944 Education Act repealed, the compulsory Act of Worship in schools abolished, and the present system of Christian indoctrination replaced by objective teaching about Christianity (and in the higher forms about other religions also), and by moral training in so far as this can be given in the classroom.

But though they are agreed about the end, Humanists differ widely about the best means to attain it. The left wing, on the whole, believes in going all out for our ultimate goal. The right wing argues that it is unrealistic to hope that the 1944 Act will be repealed in the foreseeable future, and that we should resign ourselves to a more limited objective: we should make common cause with liberal Christians (most of whom are themselves far from happy about "RI") and work with them towards a compromise which will at least be an improvement on things as they are.

By a coincidence, two pamphlets, each reflecting one of these differing approaches, have appeared within a few weeks of each other. From the right wing *Religious and Moral Education—Some Proposals for County Schools* by a group of Christians and Humanists (Howard Marratt, Borough Road College, Isleworth, Middx., 1s.) from the left wing *Religion and Ethics in Schools—the Case for Secular Education* by David Tribe, with a foreword by Lionel Elvin (National Secular Society, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1, 1s. 6d.).

To deal with the right-wing pamphlet first: *Religious and Moral Education* is much better written than most documents produced by Committees. Its keynotes are "openness" and "the open approach"—terms which occur, on the average, about once per page. Its tone is reasonable and persuasive, and if its proposals were adopted they would certainly be a great improvement on things as they are. Nevertheless, many Humanists, including the present writer, will feel that at some points the Humanist members of the Committee have conceded too much. Those who feel in this way will be particularly uneasy about the proposal for "an integrated course of religious and moral education" (p. 6), especially when it is seen in relation to the statement (p. 2) that "we recognise that if our recommendations were carried out the Christian faith would remain in a privileged position in our County schools, and we think this educationally desirable against the background of opinion in this country."

An eminent right-wing Humanist to whom I expressed my misgivings about the proposed "integrated course" assured me consolingly that "none of the Committee really knew what they meant by it." But the important thing in practice is not what the Committee may have meant by it, but what readers will suppose them to have meant. And the average reader will surely interpret the proposal that religious and moral education should be "integrated" as implying that moral education should be based on religion—and more specifically (in the light of the second quotation above) on the Christian religion.

And this, surely, is something all Humanists must

oppose. Not only for the fundamental reason that we regard Christian beliefs as untrue; not only because of the danger that if the child later rejects Christianity he may throw out the moral baby with the mythological bath-water; but also because the ethic of Christianity is, quite simply, inappropriate to the world of today. Christianity is an ascetic, other-worldly Oriental religion preached to a people living under foreign domination who firmly believed that the end of the world was at hand. Much of Jesus' ethical teaching does not begin to make sense until it is seen in its historical context; and if children today are taught that the essence of moral wisdom is to be found in such pronouncements as "blessed are the poor in spirit" and in such injunctions as "resist not evil" and "take no thought for the morrow," they can hardly be blamed for feeling that morality is just another of those "school" things that have nothing to do with real life.

There may have been sound reasons of practical policy which led the Humanist members of the Committee to make this enormous concession. But if this was so, it would surely have been desirable for them to indicate somewhere in the Report that they were opposed in principle to the proposed "integrated course," but that they were prepared to accept it in practice on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread. But there is nothing in the Report to suggest that any members of the Committee had qualms about the proposal.

David Tribe's *Religion and Ethics in Schools* belongs to the other end of the Humanist spectrum, and to this reviewer at least his racy, zestful, hard-hitting polemic came as a refreshing change from the Laodicean mildness of *Religious and Moral Education*. Mr. Tribe lays about him with gusto, demolishing the fiction that the Church pioneered in public education, showing how empty is the claim that "RI" is good for morals, derisively quoting fatuous statements from the writings of the faithful, and drawing a satirical picture of the agnostic teacher at prayers. He is admittedly selective, but he never fails to document his facts. The arrangement of the pamphlet is somewhat unsystematic, but this is a minor criticism; taken as a whole *Religion and Ethics in Schools* is a spirited and stimulating performance in the best pamphlet-teering tradition. It is a tribute to its quality that one of our most eminent educationists, Professor Lionel Elvin, Director of the Institute of Education of the University of London, has contributed a Foreword. This foreword rejoices the heart. It is temperate but completely outspoken, and in the space of two-and-a-half pages it presents a condensed statement of Humanist educational policy that could hardly be bettered.

Some right-wing Humanists will criticise the body of the pamphlet. They will say, in effect, "No doubt this was fun to write, and those who already agree with you will enjoy it immensely. But what do you hope to achieve by it? In the present climate of thought we can't hope to get anywhere except in co-operation with Christians, and this sort of thing will only antagonise them."

This argument is certainly not negligible—I have come near to being convinced by it myself. But on the whole I am not convinced, and I think the reply should run something like this. By all means let Humanism have an "ecumenical" wing whose members co-operate with Christians, so far as they can do so without ditching our
(Concluded on page 398)

This Believing World

THE OTHER day the BBC gave us a "viewpoint," an impression of the life and work of Reinhold Niebuhr, described as "the greatest English-speaking theologian of the twentieth century. As if that was not enough, we were told that Arthur Schlesinger, one of the Kennedy "brains," called Niebuhr "one of the few really great Americans." His parents were German and, no doubt, he fully deserved the enconiums showered upon him; but whether by accident or design, Niebuhr carefully avoided giving his opinion on the subject of Jesus.

★

FIRST, THOUGH a great theologian, he never mentioned Jesus once when talking. He never wanted people to put all their trust in gentle Jesus meek and mild, and never stressed that only "our blessed Lord" could save you from eternal perdition. Niebuhr did attack many of the wrongs our modern society suffered from, but it seemed to us that what he said had just as well been said by all kinds of speakers—politicians, sociologists, reformers, and Humanists in general. Was he afraid of calling himself a Christian?

★

WHEN WE hear some of the broadcasts on religion in schools, we really feel sorry for the teachers. They must have a hard task inculcating absurd Bible stories into their pupils as Gospel truth. We listened recently to a teacher who first read out how Jesus was tempted by the Devil, and then asked the class what they thought about it all? The children were *nearly* sure that God and Jesus lived up in Heaven, though one of them bravely asserted that she thought God lived sometimes in Jerusalem. As to "temptation" or the Devil, all the children who spoke hadn't the ghost of an idea what the terms meant.

★

IN THE same programme were religious teachers who thought it was unfair that children should be asked such questions at all. How much better it was to teach how Jesus loved to have little children come to him, and similar beautiful teachings. To ask them to deal with the Devil and God in Heaven was preposterous. In fact, we know nothing which explodes so thoroughly the assertion that the teachings of Jesus would be understood by the youngest child as a sound religious teacher trying to explain them.

★

AND THIS was certainly what Harold Loukes, MA, Reader in Education at Oxford University, must have thought. He gave the schools a lecture on "Getting to know Christianity," and began by throwing over most of it. The idea that we should take the Bible literally shocked him. Of course it does not teach science, he contemptuously claimed. You must remember that the Bible is not just a book but many books, and you have to get behind it, so to speak, to understand it.

★

WE KNOW that the first chapter of Genesis is not true—science has demonstrated that. But Genesis has other meanings, apparently, though we must confess we were unable to gather from the plethora of words he poured out what they were. But throwing Genesis overboard as Mr. Loukes did, only increases the difficulty. If there never were any Adam and Eve, there could never have been any original sin to save us from for which Jesus died on the cross. There was no temptation from a Devil, or expulsion from the Garden of Eden. In fact, woman was

not to blame, as dear old Adam unashamedly maintained, and most Christians since have believed. So were are we? We give it up.

NOT WAITING FOR GODOT

By PHYLLIS K. GRAHAM

(Concluded from page 392)

Brief finale in a Balham front parlour.

MRS. ARRIS

Couldn't make 'ead or tail of it.

MRS. AWKINS

Shockin' I calls it. Fust they tells us we're all hapes—now they sez Almighty Gawd's a hape. The BBC oughter to be ashamed of itself, that's wot I sez.

MRS. HATKINS

Corruptin' the kiddies like that. 'Ow can they say their prayers to a bloomin' Chimp?

MR. AWKINS

(from the depths of his armchair) Nice sort o' bloke, though, hall the same. Friendly like. No nonsense abaht 'im.

MRS. AWKINS

Oo? The young feller? Bit of a slob if you arsk me. Hall that fuss, an' then 'e bites into a blinkin' banana. Why din't they get ole Dimbleby on it? 'Ed 'ave 'ad more sense.

MR. AWKINS

(on a half-wistful note) No, not 'im. T'other. Be nice, some'ow, if there was a Gawd like that. Friendly like. No nonsense abaht 'im.

MRS. HATKINS

Law, Mr. Awkins, wot an idea! Yer don't want no Hape to say yer prayers to, do yer?

MR. AWKINS

I don't say no prayers. An' 'e don't want none. Sensible, I calls that.

MRS. AWKINS

Shut up, do, yer mouldy 'eathen! Think I want everyone ter know I got a *hatheist* fer a husband?

MRS. ARRIS

(almost thoughtfully) Ho, was *that* wot it was hall about? Well, there may be somethink in it.

MRS. AWKINS

Now don't go puttin' ideas inter 'is 'ead. 'E ain't got many, an' most of 'ems rotten. Ter think 'e used ter be a choir-boy an' all. 'S'nough ter break yer 'cart.

MRS. HATKINS

It is that an' no mistake. *Hi* dunno wot society's comin' to.

MRS. ARRIS

(dreamily) There's more in hall this than meets the hey. Oo knows . . .

MR. AWKINS

(suddenly rising from his chair with unaccustomed vigour) *Hi* knows somethin'—an' that's wot. *Hi'm* goin' aht fer a pint. Goin' ter drink the 'ealth of ole Godotti an' the hapes. So long, ladies!

MRS. AWKINS

(frantic) 'Eney—!

But Mr. A. eludes her and vanishes. A strange, stunned gloom holds the party for a few moments. Then the torrent of feminine vituperation erupts with violence. Only Mrs. Arris is silent. Slumped in her chair, blinking unseeingly at the Screen, she lets the world go by.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

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OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Marble Arch and North London: (Marble Arch). Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. L. EBURY and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Bristol Humanist Group (51 Alma Road, Bristol 8), Tuesday, December 14th, 7.30 p.m.: Informal gathering.

Glasgow Secular Society (Central Halls, 25 Bath Street), Sunday, December 12th, 2.45 p.m.: HUGH McDAIRMID, "The Changing Position of Religion Today."

Humanist Teachers' Association (13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London, W.8), Sunday, December 12th, 3 p.m.: DAVID TRIBE, "Religion and Ethics in School."

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, December 12th, 6.30 p.m.: Alderman E. MARSTON, Councillor E. M. HARDY, Councillor J. ALSTER, Councillor R. TREWICK, "Any Questions."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, W.C.2), Sunday, December 12th, 11 a.m.: LORD SORENSEN, "Human Rights in 1965." Tuesday, December 14th, 7.30 p.m.: W. THOMPSON, "Our Daily Bread."

Notes and News

WESTMINSTER ABBEY is, as Geoffrey Moorhouse remarked in the *Guardian* (27/11/65), possibly the most famous church in Christendom after St. Peter's in Rome. Few people consider it primarily as a church, however, but rather as a national mausoleum and place of royal and parliamentary pageantry. Probably the two main recollections of the Abbey in most visitors' minds will be Poets' Corner and the tomb of the Unknown Warrior. It has, as Mr. Moorhouse said, "strayed a long way from its origins" 900 years ago. When Edward the Confessor built the first church on the site it was "for the benefit of an austere monasticism," and when, in 1245, Henry II sponsored the beginnings of the present building it was "to shelter the remains of saintly Edward." The Abbey was intended to be a place of pilgrimage, but many of the modern "pilgrims" never pay the 2s. required to visit Edward's tomb.

★

MR. MOORHOUSE believes that a gradual change has taken place in "the Abbey's conscience" in the last few years. He dates it from "the time they took a Warden of Keble from Oxford and made him Dean, brought a bishop home from South Africa to a billet in Little Cloisters, offered a canonry to the Church's missionary

expert, and so strengthened the scholarly nucleus already in residence." The Dean and Chapter of Westminster is now "more nearly an activist" team: it writes joint letters to the *Times* and offers "tough-minded preaching at Westminster" for the first time in many generations." And it is intended that in its nine-hundredth anniversary year commencing on December 28th, "the Abbey's purpose as a church shall be reasserted." But, Mr. Moorhouse concluded, the millions who make a beeline for Poets' Corner every year will take some convincing . . ."

★

IN FACT, the Dean and Chapter of Westminster faces a hopeless task. The Abbey "lives" as the resting-place of the nation's honoured dead: as a church it itself is dead.

★

"WE MAY have to shut and demolish a considerable number of churches and to unite parishes which once were flourishing." Another sign of the times from the Bishop of Manchester, Dr. William Greer, at his diocesan conference on November 27th. Dr. Greer announced that machinery had been set up and officers appointed to deal with pastoral reorganisation in the Manchester diocese (*The Observer*, 28/11/65), and a master plan, co-ordinated with the plans of local authorities, would be ready within 18 months. It is not, we imagine, planned to shut or demolish Manchester Cathedral though, from our recollection of many years spent in the city, congregations were pitifully small.

★

IT WAS under the heading "Formidable Humanist" that John Raymond reviewed Alberto Moravia's *Man as an End* (Secker and Warburg, 35s.) in the *Sunday Times* (28/11/65). The book, which we have not yet read, takes its title from an essay written nearly twenty years ago, calling for the world "to be brought back to man's measure." Moravia is a humanist—Mr. Raymond wrote—"in the sense that he would agree with Auden's recent statement that the only unacknowledged legislators of the world are the secret police." Isabel Quigly, in her review of the book in the *Guardian* (26/11/65), compared Moravia's thesis to a sixth-form essay. He has an agreeable "Utopian dream" of the destruction and disappearance of states and nations, and he theorises and word-spins "to no great effect." Still, we intend to get *Man as an End*. From our experience, Moravia is never dull, and it cannot be too often insisted that the world needs "to be brought back to man's measure."

★

FEW relatively easy names can be more often misspelt than that of Richard Carlile. In another *Guardian* book review—of Peter Fryer's *The Birth Controllers* (Secker and Warburg, 42s.)—by Alex Comfort, the name was printed like that of Thomas—as Carlyle. It even appeared wrongly once in *The Bradlaugh Case* by Walter Arnstein (Oxford University Press, 50s.); this time spelt like the town. Now we can't think that Dr. Comfort or Professor Arnstein would make such mistakes (more likely someone slipped up in the reading), but we look forward to the day when Carlile's true worth is recognised. Perhaps then we shall see his name printed correctly.

★

WE ARE often asked for the works of Joseph McCabe which, alas, are now virtually out of print in this country. THE FREETHINKER Bookshop has, however, been able to obtain copies of his *History of the Popes* from New Zealand. It is offered in two paperback volumes at 6s. plus 6d. postage.

Humanist Policy on "RI"

(Concluded from page 395)

principles. But we must be realistic (the right wing has no monopoly of this word!) and face the fact that we cannot hope to get far by this means alone. Fundamentally, Christians approve of indoctrination though they do not call it by that name, and they can always appeal to the "state of public opinion" as an argument for resisting reform. It is not a conclusive argument—public opinion was, and still is, strongly opposed to the abolition of hanging, but hanging has been abolished none the less. But the Humanist movement has not yet found its Sidney Silverman, and while we await his appearance, the most effective way of promoting our aims is by a campaign to change public opinion about the issues with which we are concerned. For this we must address ourselves, not to the minority of committed Christians who are beyond the reach of argument, but to the great mass of the population whose Christianity is merely nominal.

These are the people who have no religious convictions—apart, perhaps, from a vague feeling that "there must be something"—and who never go near a church except for a social occasion like a wedding or a christening; but who nevertheless, when they are interrogated by Gallup pollsters, reply unhesitatingly that they are Christians and that they want their children to have religious instruction in school. So long as opinion polls give the results they do, no Government is going to show any interest in repealing the 1944 Education Act—this is the hard fact round which our policy must be built. But need we be too pessimistic about changing the poll results? We can take heart from the achievement of the Homosexual Law Reform Association, which in seven years has seen a complete change of opinion in its own field. The proportion of the population in favour of changing the law on homosexuality was, in 1958, 25 per cent.; in 1965 63 per cent. (National Opinion Poll, October 1965). The "climate of thought," after all, is not like the literal climate—something we must adapt to with resignation but that we cannot hope to change. I think I changed it quite appreciably myself ten years ago, in the course of two short broadcasts; and the openings for this kind of thing are much greater now than they were. But before pursuing this topic we may do well to take a closer look at the results of recent opinion polls, since these are not nearly so unfavourable to our cause as is sometimes supposed.

The most recent survey, carried out by Gallup Poll Ltd. on behalf of ABC television (*Television and Religion*, University of London Press, 4s. 6d.) contained the question "What do you think the schools should do about religion?", the interviewee being required to choose between five answers. The answers were as follows (the percentage choosing each of them is shown in brackets):—

Just have scripture lessons	(27%)
Give regular religious instruction	(37%)
Teach them about other religions as well as Christianity	(30%)
Cut out all religion and scripture	(4%)
Don't know	(8%)

The wording of the answers is open to criticism—the distinction between "scripture lessons" and "religious instruction" is not entirely clear, and answers (ii) and

(iii) are not mutually exclusive. But the important point in the present context is that the result certainly does not show, as some press reports have suggested, that only four per cent. of the population are dissatisfied with the present system of religious instruction. It would be nearer the truth to say that only 64 per cent. are satisfied; most of those who chose answer (iii)—as I should have done myself if I had been interviewed—must presumably have been critical, to say the least, of the present system.

The figure of 64 per cent., incidentally, corresponds closely with the result of an earlier survey carried out by the Audience Research Department of the BBC (*Religious Broadcasts and the Public*, private circulation). The question there put was "Do you think it is a good thing for children to have religious instruction in day school?" and the possible answers (better formulated than in the Gallup survey) were:—

Yes, a good thing	(67%)
Depends on the instruction	(19%)
No, not a good thing	(7%)
Don't know	(7%)

It is surely not unrealistic to hope that that by a well-organised campaign we could change these proportions substantially. It is not as though we should be trying to change deeply-held convictions; all we should be up against, in most cases, is convention and mental inertia. What is needed is a steady stream of counter-propaganda (we must not be afraid of this word) against the pervasive propaganda of the Churches and the Establishment. The people we must approach are not much interested in philosophical arguments against theism. But they are intensely interested in the well-being of their children, and at present they vaguely suppose that this is in some way promoted by "RI." We must convince them that moral training (which, one suspects, is all most of them are really concerned about) can be given much more effectively if it is not tied up with improbable beliefs about the supernatural government of the universe. We must suggest that it is not really good policy to try to promote truthfulness and other virtues among children by teaching them things that are not true. We must argue that school chapels and Acts of Worship are a waste of time, and an inducement to cynicism, among children who do not take them seriously, and a potent source of intellectual confusion and emotional disturbance among those who do. We must point out that the hypocrisy imposed on teachers is bad both for their morale and their morals—and so one could go on.

The best media for such arguments are undoubtedly broadcasting and the press. Meetings are well worth while, partly because they lead to press reports which are often followed by correspondence: but obviously even the best-attended meeting cannot compare in effectiveness with a TV programme which is watched by millions of viewers. We have some of the most eminent educationists and some of the best-known broadcasters in the country on our side. And we now have a Humanist Broadcasting Council to whose suggestions the BBC and Independent Television authorities are prepared to listen. In the words of a recent article in the *Humanist*—what are we waiting for?

Points From New Books

OSWELL BLAKESTON

It is summer in Switzerland, and the boys who live as unofficial ski-instructors have to find other ways to survive without work permits. In Romain Gary's *The Ski Bum* (Michael Joseph, 21s.) Lenny leaves the mountains and appears in Geneva to chat up some sort of a summer job. He gets mixed up with a fringe society who test about the obscenity of modern politics. When Mao Tse-tung tells Nehru he can afford to lose three hundred million people in a nuclear war because there will still be enough Chinese left to savour the fruits of victory over capitalism, these intelligent youngsters see it as "filthy ideological pornography and perversity." So, to give the politicians a clear idea of their own moral abasement, it is suggested that sons and daughters should pose for pornographic pictures and show them at press conferences to make it clear what they think about their fathers' standards. "If all the kids from here to Peking started copulating in the streets, perhaps our so-called leaders would have a better, clearer image of what they are doing." Politicians breed monsters with all their filth—well, let them see monsters!

But that is only one of the brilliant ideas the young people throw out. They talk sensitively about painting and jazz, and they are always vastly entertaining. Moreover, there is a modern love story and a sub-plot about gold smuggling to make this book deliciously worth reading. Here's just one short extract to give a quality of the wit:

... That's what mass media do to you. It's all gone subliminal. You go to God or Jesus Christ all the time without even realising it, even though you had never looked for help from someone who wasn't there in the first place. (You get thirsty, you ask for a Coke, without ever thinking.)

Pietro Aretino, the subject of James Cleugh's biography, *The Divine Aretino* (Blond, 45s.), was the son of a Tuscan shoemaker who became the most expert blackmailer in Renaissance Italy. He blackmailed Popes, threatening to expose their vices unless they sent him lordly gifts. Mr. Cleugh quotes the story of a preacher who, "wishing to describe the papal court and not wanting to get clergyman's throat over it, simply showed his congregation a painting of hell." There was plenty of scope, then, for an enterprising and "divine" blackmailer. The one miracle was that Aretino survived the hired assassins; but he was made of sterner stuff and had worked, in his impoverished youth, as a servant in a monastery.

His experiences in the monastery led him to propose a sound reason for the holy executives insisting on Lenten fasts. "They go on like that not for the good of our souls but simply to save money on our keep. For when Lent comes round, lo and behold, the first course consists of a couple of anchovies followed by a few Sardinian weeds, burnt rather than cooked. With them comes a bean soup, innocent of salt or oil. It's enough to make you curse heaven. Then in the evening for supper we enjoy ten nettle leaves and a musty roll at their bidding. "One may be sure that a very different fare was served at the abbot's table."

Finally, Pietro said, he was kicked out of the monastery for joining in the sexual antics of the monks. Such merriment, like good viands, was the privilege of the masters and simply an abomination in an attendant layman. Then, when on his death bed, they forced on him the rites of extreme unction, he said: "I'm all greased up now, so keep the rats away."

Moment of Truth

By HARRY MORRIS

THE Red Bishop stared moodily across the board. A young Pawn looked at him, a puzzled expression on his chubby little face. After a few moments the Pawn plucked up enough courage to approach the Bishop. "What's the matter, your Grace," asked the little chap nervously.

"Matter, matter," grumbled the Bishop, "I'll tell you what's the matter. They trying to reform us, that's what!"

The Pawn's mouth dropped open. "What, trying to reform . . . us?"

The Bishop nodded sadly. "I'm afraid so." He thought for a moment, then continued. "They say if we don't reform soon we'll all be gonners."

At that moment a Red Knight skipped up to them, and sat down on a vacant square next to the Bishop. "What's wrong, old boy?" he shouted cheerfully to the Bishop.

The Bishop stared down his nose at the Red Knight, who was still recovering from the exertions of his odd little move. "You will kindly address me by my title, or I will have you excommunicated," he snarled.

The Red Knight snorted. "All right, all right, old boy, keep your vestments on!"

The Bishop turned puce, and started to mutter something about Deadly Sins and Purgatory, and would have exploded on the spot had he not received an urgent summons to support his Brother Bishop, who was in a tight corner.

As he disappeared diagonally across the board, the Knight turned to address the Red Pawn, who obviously had not realised that Bishops were just as easily upset as anyone else. "What bee has he got buzzing around his mitre this time?" the Knight asked, nodding after the Bishop.

The Pawn tried to pull himself together. "He said something about . . . reformation?"

"Ah, yes." The Red Knight nodded wisely.

"It's not true, is it?" inquired the Pawn, nervously licking his lips.

"'Fraid so, old boy," called the Red Knight as he hopped away, "must leave you now."

The Pawn slumped down, stunned. "They can't change us," he muttered unhappily, "we're perfect." He furrowed his brow, as a terrible doubt struck him. "At least," he murmured, "that's what they've always told us."

His thoughts were rudely interrupted by a piercing scream, and he looked up in time to see a Red Knight being captured by a White Rook. "Goodness," he thought, "they're getting close."

A few seconds later a Red Rook rushed up to him, and sat down heavily on the next square. "Ah!" "Oh!" "Ooooooh!" he exclaimed, "that was too close for comfort." He started to lick his wounds, with much grunting and groaning, whilst the Pawn looked on sympathetically.

At length the Pawn spoke. "Tough, is it?" he asked.

The Red Rook looked at the Pawn, and sighed wearily. "Son, we're on the run. Ever since they realised we're not perfect after all they've started to think for themselves." His lips curled in a sneer. "If I'd had

my way we would have persuaded them we were right, all right, always right!"

The Pawn was visibly shattered. "So that's it," he moaned, "we aren't perfect after all!" He stared sullenly at the Red Rook. "And you knew that we weren't perfect and you let us go on believing..." His voice trailed off into nothing, and he started to sob bitterly.

The Red Rook had by this time fully recovered, and the old light was back in his eyes. "Oh, yes, we would have convinced them," he rasped savagely. "If only they'd let me have my Inquisition."

Suddenly they heard a noise, and they both looked up to see the Red King himself approaching, loaded with as much money and jewellery as he could carry. He pulled up in front of the Red Rook. "Right, you two," he snapped, "lock the road behind me, and stay until your supplies run out, or you are captured. You must give me time to escape." With that the Red King continued his retreat, all the time muttering to himself, "I must escape, I must escape."

For a few seconds the Red Rook and the little Red Pawn stared after him, and then they turned and prepared to defend themselves.

When the Whites captured the little Pawn a short time afterwards, all he would say was, "But he was supposed to die for us."

WHY BE MILITANT

(Concluded from page 394)

I do not believe that I wish to offend any of my personal opponents, or deal with them with anything but firm persuasiveness. Christians sometimes plead they "love the sinner and hate the sin," and they are inspired to preach salvation for fear of the wrath to come. For my part, I may love Christians, but detest their Christianity, and wish to give them reason, happiness, and enlightenment in the only world I know, before the flame of life is extinguished for aye! No one who has indulged in the slightest degree of freethought propaganda against the Churches does not soon know he has enemies at work against him, using methods which would probably horrify everyday Christians.

How soon one discovers—one does not have to be a Charles Bradlaugh to learn it—how very useful, and indeed vital, is some acquaintance with the law. Is not that in itself suggestive? What indictment, too, can be made against the Churches, the Catholic in particular, as a tremendous force against human happiness? Why are abortions forced into the septic basements of struck-off doctors? Because of a medieval and superstitious view of the soul which is as dead as Egyptian ideas on re-incarnation. How many men and women are yoked together in a union which is a mockery of all that the Christian Churches paint idealistically as "Christian marriage!" Is it not due to the fact that the divorce laws of this country are still based on views, formulated millenia ago, postulating the existence of a world of which we have no knowledge? Everywhere reforms are blocked by the opposition of the Christian Churches, where, that is, the clock is not actually *put back* by them.

When people say to me, "Why be militant?" my reply runs, "Why not?" The enemy is basically uncompromising. Behind this demand is the assertion of divine right. We can dictate, but you are in error, and error has no rights. Then I answer them with the words of Oliver Cromwell: "Are you sure, in your bowels, you are right?" Moreover, this sweet reasonableness, on the lips of churchmen, is

not the doctrine they follow in practice, even on the surface, and certainly behind the scenes. It is logical enough. Their opposition is believed to be the devil and all his works. The fight is unceasing, the battle is real, and it is for men's souls. How does one break in a horse? Force a saddle and bridle on him. If you wish to be blinkered and to feel the bit between your teeth, do not refuse the first lump of sugar, the first overtures. Listen to the liars who tell you it is unbecoming and unkind to keep a free mind and a free tongue in a (relatively) free country. Subject to the law of defamation, and to good taste, there should be no bar.

CORRESPONDENCE

A mother of two mourns the death of her husband and father of her children; the wife of another man has to wait for at least ten years before he will be back with her. The reason for this twin tragedy is that one man murdered another. Mr. James Corrigan, of Port Dundas, Glasgow, was stabbed to death by Mr. James Murray, of Blackhill, Glasgow. And the latter was sentenced to life imprisonment, which averages out at ten years.

Why? At the trial which recently took place the court was told of a sudden lunge, a fight in a lane, and a stabbing.

Why? The two men had an argument. This argument developed into a quarrel, then a fight.

Why? It is tragically simple. They were arguing about religion! (See Daily Express, 3/11/65).

PETER KEARNEY.

FAMILY LIMITATION

I should like to point out to the Vatican that "Almighty God" was himself an advocate of birth control as his son Jesus is constantly referred to as "his only begotten son." Surely his faithful believers should follow his example and restrict their families likewise.

(Mrs.) M. A. WATSON

A PART TO PLAY?

I have been reading THE FREETHINKER for sixty years, my family having been readers since its beginning. Chapman Cohen was my mentor for some twenty years and I have Mr. Cutner's very nice copper engraving of Cohen looking at me at this moment. THE FREETHINKER and Cohen in particular never made tacitly or otherwise any social or class distinctions. Snobbery never

ROBERT F. TURNER

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JAN 27 1966

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A CURIOUS by-product has arisen as a result of the recent Vatican Council. The short papacy of John XXIII seemed to many outside the Roman Catholic Church to suggest that a new spirit of peace and unity was abroad. It appeared likely that this would have the effect of freeing devotees of that Church from some shackles which the past had bound upon them. In England, names such as Archbishop Roberts, SJ, or Mr. Paul Johnson of the *New Statesman*, achieved a fresh significance. There was an ecumenical spirit to be found, which suggested that the old Tractarian dream of the reunion of Christendom was about to be realised. The past must be forgotten and the violences of the 16th century buried forever. Masses take place now at Romanist parish churches for non-Catholic congregations. Curious incidents occur where Roman Catholic priests occupy Anglican pulpits. So far has this new ecumenism spread that it was possible for leading figures in the British Humanist Association to have a friendly conference in Utrecht with Vatican representatives. If this be a true picture, it might well be said that the secularist should likewise plead his case with a new spirit and that, in so doing, he should seek to bury much of the past. But the only real issue is whether this picture has about it a reality and a truth or whether it is little more than window-dressing designed to further the world-conversion which the Roman Catholic Church sees as its real ends and aims.

Anti-Clericalism Not New

The vista of Roman Catholics presenting their case in a modern-minded manner is not something new or even a phenomenon of the present century. A like claim could have been made for Erasmus and other Renaissance figures who never repudiated Roman Catholicism, just as it could have been made for the Conciliar Movement of over a century earlier. Figures like Lord Acton are reminiscent of the sense of foreboding with which some liberal Catholics regarded the Vatican Council decisions in 1870. It might well be claimed that Newman's famous *Essay on Development* was a textbook for Roman Catholic liberalism. Areas of theological speculation have always been permitted, even though they must be undertaken within the boundaries set up by defined dogmas. It is not a new spirit which permits certain Roman Catholic laity to speculate in discussion over the permissible limits which may be extended to contraception, nor is it a fresh outlook which permits them to be championed by a somewhat freelance ecclesiastic of the type of Archbishop Roberts. It may be said that traces of an impatient anti-clericalism are apparently arising. The person who is somewhat vague on his history may see here signs of a break. But, once again, he is facing something of age-long existence. Educated Roman Catholics may, and frequently do, criticise the hierarchy, as may be seen once again in the story of Lord Acton and the magazine, the *Rambler*. Popular anti-clericalism existed long before the Reformation and brought about such incidents as that of the behaviour of

the parishioners of Hayes in Middlesex in 1517 chronicled by G. R. Elton in his *Star Chamber Studies*.

These things are domestic disputes and the freethinker who imagines that he can make use of them is asking to end up by being belaboured by both sides, the usual fate of the stranger who turns up and intervenes in a family quarrel. At the present moment, certain issues are being canvassed within the Roman Catholic Church. They are

being propagandised to suggest that the old English Protestant picture of Rome is false. The vital question is whether they can really be accepted as presenting the true attitude of the Roman Catholic Church seen in its wholeness to the problems of present-day

society. In short, a vital question for John Bull, upon his answer will depend the extent to which the Roman Catholic Church is permitted in the future to capitalise the assets of the contemporary world. Perhaps, however, it would be ungenerous not to give one mite of praise to the spirit of the new liberalism. It has improved the manners of Roman Catholic journalists, and present-day Roman Catholic newspapers are not normally disfigured by the tirades of slanderous abuse with which Dr. Coulton had to suffer from writers of the Chesterton-Belloc school a generation ago.

Catholic Emancipation Act

The real issues, so far as England is concerned, stem from the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. In that year, Parliament removed a host of restrictions from Roman Catholics and permitted them to sit as members of the House of Commons. It never unsaid any claim to the reality of situations which had evoked the original penalties. So far, this fact might seem to be nothing other than a step forward in religious toleration and one which was to be welcomed. Yet, it must not be forgotten that the step had been opposed for years by eminent constitutionalists and finally only came about as a sequel to the Irish blackmail initiated by Daniel O'Connell. The reasoned opposition which had previously been heard from outstanding lawyers of the school of Lord Eldon or Lord Ellenborough was not a piece of pure religious bigotry. It was that these people had accepted the sovereignty of a foreign power not invariably friendly to the government of this country and therefore constituted a political danger. Contemporary replies are highly significant today. It is only necessary to recall the names of Charles Butler, Keenan or the Irish Bishop Doyle to recall a spate of writing watering down and minimising the Catholic claims with regard to the Pope. It was indeed fashionable to impute that the late medieval idea of papal infallibility was nothing more than a Protestant fiction. Such works as Salmon's *Infallibility of the Church* or Dr. Coulton's *Papal Infallibility* contain a quantity of material in proof of this statement. The Roman Catholic Church in England had, as Philip Sidney pointed out in *Modern Rome in Modern England*, reached a stage of sheer poverty. It was possible for an Englishman of the type of Sydney Smith to dismiss the Papacy

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Liberals of Catholicism

By F. H. AMPHLETT MICKLEWRIGHT

as "the last relic of the Caesars sitting amidst the ruins thereof". Dangers seemed far away, and toleration an obvious social demand.

Immigration

It is merely a matter of common notoriety that the Roman Church soon found its feet and became a strident claimant for attention and, in 1850, the hierarchy was restored with the use of various self-styled titles. It was helped in no small degree by the Romantic revival and the Oxford Movement with their appeal to a bogus medievalism, real to the poet or dreamer but quite unreal to the historian. Stories were circulated about monasticism which might provide material for the sob-stuff writing of Cardinal Gasquet or Mgr. Benson, but for which there could be little room after Coulton or Baskerville had conducted their researches. The intellectual and aesthetic movement was carried forward by such writers as W. G. Ward into the field of ultramontane Papalism. In England itself, Irish immigration built up a huge working-class and largely illiterate following. At a later date, the suppression of the religious orders in France led to a flood of them arriving in this country and to the spate of convent schools and the like. Later still, other immigrations have forced up numbers of adherents.

It may well be that the faith is presented in differing terms depending upon the level of education in the audience. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the economy of truth must have the effect of largely assisting this process. But it remains true that the basic dogmas are of a type which remain unchanged, despite what Archbishop Roberts and his fellow-liberals might say. In biblical studies, the Roman Catholic Church stands for an extreme conservatism underwritten by the Papal Biblical Commission of 1908. The result is that basically it is as fundamentalist as Billy Graham. As Dr. Coulton shows in *Romanism and Truth*, much of its teaching is taken up with sin and damnation, and not a little of this is vitally concerned with the "sin of schism". The Church is the infallible teaching body ruled over by a Pope who is infallible in faith and morals when speaking *ex cathedra*. In 1950, the Pope proclaimed the dogma of the corporeal assumption of the Virgin Mary, an important point when it is recalled that the method used meant that a position had been reached whereby the Pope might proclaim infallible dogmas without the aid of a general council. It should not require much thought or imagination to understand the social implications of these developments.

Dictatorship

In short, the Roman Catholic Church faces modern England as an infallible body with teaching prerogatives and a political organisation of an extremely well-formulated kind. The practical dictatorship of the Papacy suggests an approach not unlike that of the Fascist. Perhaps it was not an accident that the creed of the Nazi took root in the romantic and Catholic south of Germany. As a result, it makes dictatorial claims in antagonism to modern libertarian and democratic ideals. It should not be forgotten that the famous encyclical condemning liberalism, and indeed most modern liberties, promulgated by Pius IX a century ago, has never been withdrawn; nor should it be overlooked that the political alignments of the Papacy in the modern world have definitely leant towards the totalitarian dictatorships. In England, a situation has come about where the overwhelming cost of a Catholic school designed to propagate a sectarian and intolerant creed of this kind has fallen on to the ordinary ratepayers. Every pressure is brought to bear both privately and publicly to push the Catholic claims wherever

they may impinge upon social situations. The ecumenical movement has been used to undermine the non-papal attitude of the Church of England; and the entirely unhistorical Anglo-Catholic claim that this church was Protestant before the Reformation and Catholic afterwards has allowed Anglicans to fall for the curious Vatican overtures. In short, the difference between 1829 and today is that the Roman Catholic Church is no more a struggling sect in England living off its romantically-conceived past, but is a definite menace to freedom of thought and to toleration in the country. Perhaps the old-fashioned constitutionalists of the age of Lord Eldon or Lord Ellenborough were not so wrong after all. Perhaps there should have been safeguards in the Catholic Emancipation Act to prevent the Roman Catholic Church, with its foreign leadership, from interfering in English politics.

No Place for Liberality

It was in some ways to be foreseen that some Roman Catholic liberals should raise their voices today. Perhaps it was to be expected that liberal expostulations would be heard in 1965 just as they were previously heard in 1870. But it must not be overlooked that they are but a small handful. It could be that the Vatican Council just concluded could evolve a parallel history to the post-1870 situation. A few liberals left the Church. They dispersed themselves over a field ranging from Old Catholicism to Unitarianism and have come to almost nothing. Great talents of a Dollinger or a Suffield whilst protesting against ultramontanist tended to be wasted in the ecclesiastical sand. The reactions to the 1870 ultramontane spirit threw up the Modernist movement, mainly in France. When the time came, it was crushed out by Pius X, and its subsequent collapse may be read in such autobiographies as those of Loisy, Tyrrell or Houtin. The Roman Catholic Church may have room for discussion, but it has no final place for liberality when the moment is reached at which the liberality touches the nerve-centres of dogma. At the present moment, the situation seems to be exactly the same, whatever Archbishop Roberts and his associates may say about contraception and population explosions. To seek to build up a link between humanist ideals, springing ultimately in spirit from the Renaissance, and a handful of Roman Catholic liberals is building upon quicksand. The modern Englishman would do far better to remember that the Roman Catholic Church, with its falsified history and its autocratic spirit, is still a menace to his social and intellectual liberties.

STEPTOE'S PHILOSOPHY

ASKED FOR his "philosophy about life", Wilfred Brambell (Step toe of *Step toe and Son*) replied to the Scottish *Sunday Post* (14/11/65) that "if you can be inwardly honest and outwardly kind, then there is little time or need for any other form of religion or belief". And Mr Brambell added that he had been taught this by life itself. Do you believe in life after death? was another question. "I'll take it as it comes," he said. "I'm resigned to — and prepared for — utter annihilation at death." As for the "picture of people in flowing white togas, strumming harps on a damp cloud", it was "a load of cod's wallop!".

EDITOR'S NOTE

We apologise for certain errors in recent issues, and for the late despatch of some copies last week. Our printers recently moved to Andover, and have experienced some difficulties in the installation of machinery.

Public Detergent No 1

By KIT MOUAT

I WOULD have liked to think that our society had progressed so far that it would be able to laugh off people like Mrs Mary Whitehouse. "Whiter-than-whitehouse" it ought to be, for she is setting herself up as Public Detergent No. 1 with her "Clean-Up TV Campaign". "Clean" is such a curious word. One connects it with floors or windows, ears or air. We don't use it in connection with any of the really valuable aspects of life. We don't talk about "clean" compassion, or "clean" honesty or generosity or love or even passion.

What I resent most is that Mrs Whitehouse's attack on what she considers to be obscene ignores all the real obscenity of our time. Four-letter words can throw her into a decline. The iniquitous law of abortion, which is causing so much suffering and death, does not seem to worry her. Does Mrs Whitehouse, in her purple turban and pearls, care about the bereaved families in Vietnam, the homeless in our own country, the Africans who are treated as second-rate citizens in order that the greed, power or just the ability of white people shall be fulfilled? Does she care that homosexual men commit suicide rather than go to court after being blackmailed? If she does, we do not hear about it. What she does care about is the wrapping. She wants it to be glossy, thick and opaque. The facts must be hidden or distorted. Sex must be disguised as romance, or ignored. She wants freedom of speech, of course, but only for Christians. She is clearly a woman who wants to be a dictator, and she has found (so she says) half a million Christians to help her on her way. This is how the Nazis came to power, by talking about "purity" and relying on fear and the support of religious and sexual neurotics. Mrs Whitehouse appeals to the same destructive elements in human beings who are afraid of their own nature. She appeals not to the heart, but to the pulse of mass hysteria. She does not care about honesty on television, only about appearance. If she had anything to do with it, this country would step back into all that was most ugly about the Victorian era, and the civilised world would leave us behind and look back laughing.

I, too, enjoy *Dr Finlay's Casebook*. It isn't totally devoid of purpose, it is well acted and, in my view, fair entertainment. I also agree that many TV programmes are of much too low a standard. Whatever is produced should, ideally, be the best of its kind that the BBC and ITV can afford. This is quite different, however, from trying to reduce the whole radio and TV output to a concoction suitable only for the mentally unbalanced. What is perhaps most distressing about the Whitehouse Campaign is that it may cramp efforts to win a better all-round standard, just because people who care about such things will be afraid of being linked with the fanatical fumings of Moral Re-Armament.

A Birmingham vicar deplores that even our weekends are "smeared with blasphemy, indecency, disloyalty to our crown and country, sadism and cynicism . . .". He wants what he calls "filth" to stay in the backstreets. I enjoy *BBC 3*. Not because every item is good or even worth producing, but because it is a brave attempt in a new medium. It is also an hour when we can hope to hear articulate people expressing their ideas without fear of hurting abnormally frail sensibilities. It is a programme for adults and, as such, must inevitably offend Mrs Whitehouse. She really ought to settle for Noddy and *Listen*

With Mother with Bible readings for kicks.

The item when a clergyman knocked out his pipe and put it into a rack shaped like a crucifix was too much for Mrs Whitehouse. The idea of a "divine Father" sacrificing his "only" son to torture and death in order to "save" his other "children" from the sin that he, himself, had given them, does not repel Christians. What matters to Mrs Whitehouse is that an actor should not put his secular pipe into a cross (lamb, fish, crook?) shaped rack. It doesn't matter to her that clergymen have no answers to all the sexual problems of men and women, and that, when appealed to, they can only say, "Thou shalt not . . .". What matters is that an actor was allowed to make this point, and no real clergyman was there to gloss over the Church's total ineffectiveness in such matters.

My complaint against *BBC 3* (apart from the fact that there are so few women in the discussions) is that it only tackles the "outer covering" of Christianity. One day, perhaps, we shall reach the stage when the immorality of the faith itself can be attacked. But not if Mrs Whitehouse has anything to do with it. She has accused Humanists of having some backroom control in the BBC. I only wish it were true! After some 25 years and the Beveridge and Pilkington Reports, there have been a few Christian-Atheist discussions, and the British Humanist Association has been allowed six 15-minute programmes at a time when most people are working or out shopping. And Christians are shaking in their shoes. Poor, poor Mrs Whitehouse! Poor, poor Christians! For centuries they have managed to exterminate or silence their opponents. For centuries, heretics, atheists and agnostics have helped them to preserve their faith by avoiding delicate points of disagreement in order not to "hurt their feelings". We have been "turning the other cheek" more enthusiastically than any Christian. Now, in 1965, Christians are facing the fact that their faith cannot stand up to the freedom of its opponents. It relies on dictatorship, censorship and the good nature of anti-Christians for its survival. And Mrs Whitehouse and her friends are afraid.

The problem of censorship is a difficult one. I am not sure if I would go as far as Dr Comfort and abolish it completely. I hate children to be frightened, or disgusted by what is essentially good. I believe that when violence is depicted through any medium it should always be accompanied by obvious suffering, and that, because the sight of too much suffering can de-sensitise, only a little and relevant violence should be mixed into the diet of viewing and listening. When Picasso painted his *Guernica* there were objections that it was too horrible. We were used to war being glamorised. Such glamorisation is, to my mind, one of the real obscenities we have to worry about. I don't like the idea of the BBC preventing us from seeing a film about the results of nuclear war because it is too realistic. Does the Corporation believe that such films might produce a defeatist attitude towards the battle for peace? I don't know. All I do know is that our present censorship is ludicrous. It is not for this woman or that man to lay down a national standard.

When I read the nasty nonsense about hell and damnation published by our local Baptists, addressed "To the Children" and dropped on our door mat, I feel like suing them for mental cruelty. But then children can pick up such things before the parents reach the door, and unless

(Concluded on page 407)

This Believing World

PREMARITAL SEX is un-Christian, according to the Rev. Stanley Evans (*South London Press*, 12/11/65). It would be interesting to know if he feels the same way about adultery. After all, "our blessed Lord" let off a lady accused of that awful crime with the words: "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more." We don't know, mind you, what he would have said if she had sinned again.

★

MORMON HOT GOSPELLERS seem to have got into hot water. Some of them have been spreading the word "to lonely wives at Aldershot", reports the *People* (11/11/65), and the Military Police have had to keep watch. The Mormons may have the strictest orders "to live by a rigid code of moral behaviour" but, all the same, they have to be kept away from married quarters.

★

OUR NEWSPAPERS have already begun the annual attempt to explain the Star of Bethlehem. Of course it behaved exactly as recorded in holy writ — though otherwise it remained singularly unnoticed. The astronomer-lecturer at the London Planetarium, Alan Pilkington, is really puzzled about it, and the three wise men. Is he similarly puzzled about the three blind mice?

★

IN AN article in the London *Evening Standard* (12/11/65), Mr Pilkington reverently discourses on the star, informing us that Chinese astronomers "did in fact record a great star" which appeared "about" that time and "flared for 70 days or more". Therefore, "it might well have been the Star of Bethlehem". The *Evening Standard* also mentioned the possibility that it might have been a comet. Few seem prepared to admit that it was simply a childish myth.

★

ANOTHER BIBLICAL mystery under discussion (this time in the *Sunday Express*, 14/11/65) is the famous "speaking with other tongues" so graphically described in Acts — which is, after all, the only "history" we have of the early Church! Some enthusiastic parsons have given us specimens of the "other tongues" on radio and TV. And we are always prepared to add our quota — for a suitable fee, of course.

★

AS A RULE, of course, people only speak in strange tongues if properly filled by the Holy Ghost (as the *Sunday Express* duly points out) and this is "evidence of a great gift"; but they "receive no money" (shame!). Their "movement is growing", however. And why not? Mormonism, Christian Science and Spiritualism all claim to be growing, too! Indeed, it looks as though the sillier the religion the more fanatical proselytes it will have. The "cloven tongues as of fire" is no sillier than the "materialisations" of Spiritualism, the Book of Mormon engraved on golden plates, or the idea of curing fatal diseases by reading the balderdash of Mrs Eddy.

NUNS AND HUMANS

JULIE, aged seven, attends a convent school.

Asked by a friend who called at her Plymouth home: "Are all your teachers nuns?" Julie replied: "No, we have some human beings as well."

The Independent, (Plymouth), 5/12/65

Why No Rap For Menzies?

By P. G. ROY

THE death of Dr. H. V. Evatt, the only outstanding figure in the Australian Labour Party, evokes some memories of a land where not only the weather is paradoxical.

When during the war I returned from Australia, I left there a book banned by the Menzies administration, *Landfall in Australia* by Egon Erwin Kisch (The Roving Reporter). It is a biting account of how he as a Jewish pacifist had been refused entry into the country. Eventually he jumped from the ship and landed with a broken ankle. Since there was no denying that he had touched Australian soil he could no longer be sent back, but his legal expulsion had to go through the courts, where Kisch enjoyed addressing the Judge as "Your Warship".

After all these years I cannot claim to give an account of the present state of affairs in Australia, but as the country is still under the reign of Robert Menzies no big changes can be expected. The owners of land and cattle ranches and the fruit farmers are of necessity conservative, and the workers are mostly Roman Catholic immigrants — church-ridden and in many respects backward. So when in 1954 Dr. Evatt accused the Roman Catholic elements in his party of fascist tendencies to assist the Trojan Horse policy of the Church, Catholic action succeeded in eliminating Evatt's influence altogether. The *Times* obituary states that Evatt "cannot be blamed for starting and hammering wider a split that kept Labour out of office much too long for the political health of the country", particularly as in all probability his legal mind was far superior to that of the Prime Minister.

To show that nothing much has changed since, I quote from the Australian press of September 7th, of this year. A comedian, Gordon Chater, said in a show on Channel 7 of the Australian radio, Sydney people did not have to travel 100 miles to get a drink on Sundays. They could just go to church, put sixpence on the plate and get wine and wafers.

Immediately a Labour Senator, Dorothy Tangney, and several members of the House of Representatives complained to the Postmaster-General that Chater's reference to "Holy Communion" was *sacrilegious*, and the producer was rapped by the TV Board.

Intelligent Australians emigrate since the majority of the population has no other interest but getting drunk. This lack of interest explains why the arts do not flourish down-under. However the aborigines — who are being kept in zoo-like reservations, without education and individual freedom — are forbidden to touch spirits. When the renowned aboriginal painter Albert Namatjira was found to have had a drink with a friend, he was jailed.

There exists a *numerus clausus* for Asians — mainly Japanese pearl fishers — but darker hues of the skin are strictly kept out (the Tasmanians had been exterminated and the few aborigines, kept in a stone age state, do not count as human elements). Quite recently a little school-girl whose mother is Australian was chased out of the country because her father hailed from one of the Pacific islands. When the Australian-born writer James Aldridge (author of *The Diplomat*) returned with an Egyptian wife and their two sons, he was refused re-entry into his motherland.

But Menzies, the arch-diehard, is a respected elder statesman of the Commonwealth, and has the nerve to adjutate on other racist governments in South Africa and Rhodesia. And no finger stirs at the United Nations because he is a close friend of the centre of world reaction the US Pentagon.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, MCRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Marble Arch and North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. L. EBURY and C. E. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, December 19th, 6.30 p.m.: GILLIAN HAWTIN, "The Danger of Catholicism To-day."

Manchester Branch NSS (The Wheatsheaf Hotel, High Street), Sunday, December 19th, 7.30 p.m.: "A Lecture".

Marble Arch Branch NSS (The Carpenters' Arms, Seymour Place, London, W.1.), Sunday, December 19th, 7.30 p.m.: MARGARET MCILROY, "Some Problems of Education".

Notes and News

THE FOURTH session of the Vatican Council has ended. And it is probably true that the Church of Rome has, in the *Observer's* words (5/12/65), "moved much further forward than back". But we question the paper's view that this is "largely thanks to the determination of a few progressive cardinals". Without underestimating the persuasiveness of Cardinals Alfrink, Bea, Lercaro and Suenens, we would argue that it was the force of public opinion — Catholic and non-Catholic — that was primarily responsible for the Church setting its face towards the twentieth century. The tangible achievements of the Council are less than the "progressives" — and probably Pope John — had hoped for. The worker-priest experiment is to be resumed; the Holy Office is to be revised and renamed; and the Curia machine is to be overhauled. Most important, perhaps, a synod of bishops is to meet in 1967.

★

THERE CAN be little doubt that enlightened Catholics wished for more than this — and especially for a lifting of the ban on birth control. Perhaps the Abbot of Downside, Dom Christopher Butler, explained the reason for the failure (in an interview with Nicholas Tomalin in the *Sunday Times* magazine, 5/12/65). He didn't think there was any other way of describing "the crisis in the Church

and the struggle in the Vatican Council, than in terms of progressives and conservatives". And of the 2,500 bishops in the Council he claimed that 1,300 were progressives and 800 conservatives. "We are thus certain of the Council," he said. "I am not sure that we are certain of the Pope." Pope Paul, though allegedly elected as a liberal or progressive, who would continue the policy of his predecessor, has proved markedly less enthusiastic a reformer than Pope John. Scarcely surprising, when one recalls that the one-time Monsignor Montini was the prodigy of Pius XII.

★

POPE PAUL notwithstanding, another English progressive, Archbishop Roberts, is convinced that he is on the winning side — and this despite not being allowed to address the Council. He considers he has gained his point on birth control. The Church has debated the question and therefore it can't be a settled matter of divine law, the Archbishop argues (his Jesuit training has not been in vain). "The whole nature of the authority of the Church is changing," he says. And he instances the re-examination of papal infallibility, adding (again in typical Jesuit fashion): "We are defining more exactly just what mandate God gave the Pope to use his infallibility."

★

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of a new movement — an expansion of the one inaugurated by Mrs Avril Fox of Harlow — to combat Mrs Mary Whitehouse's Clean-Up TV campaign, is welcome. The latter — as we have repeatedly said — has been given far too much publicity and had too much notice taken of it. It is a pity, for instance, that Sydney Newman, the Head of Drama at Shepherd's Bush, should feel impelled to send out a circular to BBC drama producers calling for restraint because "the anti-BBC hounds are baying these days more shrilly than before" (*Sunday Telegraph*, 5/12/65). "Whether all this is reaction to *Up the Junction* or Kenneth Tynan's four-letter word or what," said Mr Newman, "the searchlight is on us." And he listed points to be watched carefully. Among these were references to sexual parts, underclothes, contraceptives, the portrayal of near nudity, the physical handling of someone with sex in mind, couples in bed, offensive words and unnecessarily lengthy violence.

★

THE IDEA of BBC drama producers blue-pencilling references to knickers or combinations is ludicrous. But where are they expected to draw the line on "the physical handling of someone with sex in mind" or "unnecessarily lengthy violence"? There was lengthy violence in *Culloden*, for instance, but few intelligent people would regard it as unnecessarily prolonged. There is a great deal of violence in the world, and the BBC cannot blind itself to the fact without turning itself into a sort of TV *Woman's Own*. Perhaps this is what "Public Detergent No. 1" — as Kit Mouat has designated Mrs Whitehouse — would like to see. But now the Clean-Up TV campaign will have to contend with a new movement under the aegis of Professor Richard Hoggart, of the Birmingham University Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.

★

MRS WHITEHOUSE'S connections with Moral Re-Armament are well known if not openly avowed. But then, MRA can be surprisingly reticent at times. A letter to the *Guardian* (2/12/65) signed by four Liverpool men recounted how their wives had received postal invitations to a "bring and buy" sale in aid of the New Westminster Theatre Arts Centre. "They went to the sale under the illusion that they would be helping a worthwhile cultural cause, only to find that they were unwittingly supporting the Moral Re-Armament campaign."

The Individual in History

By F. A. RIDLEY

I RECENTLY had occasion to reread the essay of the Russian Marxist scholar, G. V. Plekhanov, entitled *The Role of the Individual in History*. George Plekhanov was himself an outstanding personality who played an important part in the evolution of Russian socialism from its early pre-industrial types of anarchism and nihilism, to the Marxist ideology later adopted by the Bolshevik Party under the dynamic leadership of V. I. Lenin. Plekhanov's political relations with Lenin underwent a change after the historic Brussels-London Congress in 1903, which eventually voted to accept the new line recommended by Lenin. Plekhanov and the minority at this meeting (which included Trotsky), were henceforth to be known to world history as the Mensheviks (or minority men) in opposition to the Bolsheviks, or majority men.

Plekhanov himself, however, was always recognised by Lenin as an outstanding Marxist theorist, as in fact, the father of Russian Marxism and after his death in 1918 (soon after the Bolshevik Revolution), the Soviet Government officially published Plekhanov's collected works, which include the remarkable essay the basic theme of which I now propose to consider.

The fundamental problem which Plekhanov set out to consider in his essay (originally published in 1891 under the Tsarist Empire), was the basic one: who makes history, by what principal motivating force or forces are the major lines of universal history determined? Such a technical subject surely often lends itself to a dry-as-dust treatment in the ponderous style of a Teutonic professorial tome. To be sure, many such volumes are actually to be found obscenely (but decently!) interred in the library of the British Museum. But there is nothing in any way dry or obscure in our Russian author's treatment of this recondite theme.

For Plekhanov was not only a philosopher, but an artist — a literary stylist, lively, witty and extremely readable. So much so, in fact, that this illuminating essay on the philosophy of history reads like a novel, eloquent, lively and witty, for the author carries his learning easily and lightly. But when we turn from its form to its underlying content, we soon come up against the hard core of the Marxist philosophy. For in his generation, Plekhanov ranked as one of the foremost exponents of the theory of Historical Materialism which this essay sets out to expound. It could, in fact, be summarised as a polemical sermon on the famous text of Karl Marx: "Man makes his own history, but only under given conditions"; that lucid epitome of the Materialist conception of history.

What are these "given conditions" alluded to by Marx? Put briefly, they are the social relationships which exist in any given state and stage of society in which individuals endowed with special talent "live, move and have their being". These "given conditions" are, of course, of various kinds (as Plekhanov, who was no mechanical materialist, was careful to point out); they could be not only economic, but political or technical. But their character is ultimately decided by the nature of their contemporary society, which is itself the complex product of a combination of past social development and of present social relationships.

In all this, where does the individual come in? Not, obviously, in the absolute sense as argued, for example, by Thomas Carlyle (quoted by Plekhanov) in his famous but very misleading book, *Heroes and Hero Worship*,

wherein was eloquently expounded the "great man" theory of history. For the hero, while he certainly influences human history, can yet only do so in any social stage in a way consonant with its current development. Charles Bradlaugh, for example, was beyond doubt a "hero", a "great man" in Carlyle's special sense as a constructive maker of the historic process. He was this by virtue of his successful activity in launching his dynamic secular movement in mid-Victorian England. But Bradlaugh was only able to do this because previous social and intellectual reformers ("Tom" Paine, Richard Carlile, etc.) had won the elementary right of political democracy and free speech, which were in turn only made possible by a long previous evolution.

To take an even more famous (though very different) example, had William Shakespeare not been jilted by his girl friend and subsequently forced into an unhappy marriage, or whatever the real reason may have been for his apparently hurried departure from Stratford to London, he would never have been heard of; since even if he had found time to write all his plays by the banks of the Avon (romantic thought!), he could never have made a living out of them or even probably got them produced, since the Elizabethan drama was (as its name implies) a court drama and had no existence away from London.

But the state of society that produced the Tudor monarchy and totalitarian state over all persons and causes supreme, belongs not to the personal history of the man Will Shakespeare, nor even to the previous literary history of the English drama. For the Tudor regime and its culminating phase in the Elizabethan age had many and diverse causes that stretch from the English Reformation to the Wars of the Roses, which alone made it possible. Not forgetting Caxton's introduction of printing barely a century before Shakespeare's birth. We in no way denigrate the unique genius of the Bard of Avon in alluding to these social causes.

Society, then, must always produce the man. To take an example given by Plekhanov himself. Napoleon Bonaparte indisputably influenced history profoundly as one of the world's greatest military specialists, and perhaps still more as a major innovator in legal and administrative reforms (The Code of Napoleon). But as our Russian author shows, Napoleon could not possibly have got to the top in the exclusively aristocratic army of the Bourbon monarchy prior to the French Revolution. Without the French Revolution, Napoleon could never have become a General let alone Emperor. It was the French Revolution which created "the career open to talent" from which the unknown Corsican subaltern, Lieutenant Napoleon Bonaparte, was to profit so brilliantly. Without that major upheaval, Bonaparte would probably have ended his frustrated life as an old dug-out in a French seaside resort, having spent his life fretting over his missed opportunities and over the incompetence (of which there was plenty) in the French army of the Bourbons. (The American master of letters, Stephen Vincent Benet, has written a diverting story on this theme.) Or perhaps Napoleon would have actually joined the English navy, as he considered doing at one time (his school report said that he would make an excellent sailor).

Accordingly, what was perhaps the most spectacular career in human annals could not have taken place without the French Revolution, itself an event due to man.

complex causes. Even Napoleon was only able to make history under given conditions. And one could also cite the example of Oliver Cromwell who, during the years before the English Revolution, was on the point of emigrating to America when the Civil War broke out.

To anyone who has followed the above reasoning, the proverb "Genius will out" is only true very exceptionally. For genius — outstanding ability, usually in a particular field or direction — is ultimately dependent upon current material social and intellectual conditions. As Machiavelli (perhaps with a backward glance at his own frustrated career) aptly commented: the self-same qualities that make a man rich and famous in one era will equally certainly make him poor and a failure in another. Genius will only "out" in appropriate circumstances.

PUBLIC DETERGENT No. 1

(Concluded from page 403)

They have been given a healthy antidote, they could easily be frightened by what they read. But there is a knob on TV and radio sets. Indeed, the more responsibility that is taken away from parents, the worse. National censorship is no answer to the problems created by their neglect or stupidity.

Roman Catholics, we have to assume, would all break their own religious rules about contraceptives and abortion if the rest of us were given the information and medical treatment we would like. Again, it is we non-Christians who are expected to help Christians obey their Father God. Heavenly Grace, baptism, confirmation and divine guidance are just not enough. If Mrs Whitehouse got her way, it is we who would have to put up with a BBC policy in which sexual hypocrisy and religious totalitarianism would be encouraged, in order that the fearful could live in a make-believe world.

DAVID TRIBE CHALLENGES MRS. WHITEHOUSE

DAVID TRIBE, President of the National Secular Society, has challenged Mrs Mary Whitehouse of the "Clean-Up TV" campaign to a public debate. Here is the text of a letter he has sent to Mrs Whitehouse:

Dear Mrs Whitehouse,

For some time now you have been engaged in your campaign to, as you put it, "clean-up TV". You have issued sundry vaguely-worded statements, and devoted, one imagines, considerable time to telephoning and writing to progressive television producers to criticise their programmes. You claim that your activities have not received due consideration from the broadcasting authorities, although 400,000 viewers directly and many millions indirectly are alleged to support you.

I propose to give you an opportunity of stating your full case and defending yourself publicly against accusations of snooping and gratuitous censorship. In a word, I am challenging you to a public debate with facilities offered for televising at a mutually convenient time and place. The National Secular Society will undertake all organisational responsibility. If you do not regard yourself as an experienced debater you are at liberty to appoint as proxy any crusader of your choice, in public or private life in this country or any other, including any member of the tiny group of politicians who so vociferously support your cause. Have more than one if you like, so long as I have equivalent time.

I should advise you that a copy of this letter is being sent to the press and broadcasting authorities. If you decline to accept this challenge it will be seen that you prefer private vendetta to public discussion, that you hope that by dint of constant minority protest — as has happened in the past — programmes will be quietly axed, promising careers stifled and characters assassinated, with no access to the public for redress.

With all best wishes, Yours sincerely,

David Tribe.

Mr. Tribe's letter was dated December 3rd, 1965. a few days later he received a reply from Mrs. Whitehouse declining.

CORRESPONDENCE

A PART TO PLAY ?

I DO NOT know whether, as a contributor to THE FREETHINKER, who spent six years at university, etc., I would qualify to reply, among others, to Kenneth J. Ead? His is a letter which certainly should not go unanswered, because it raises questions vital to the present-day freethought movement.

Take, first of all, his points about literary qualifications and affluence. Speaking for myself, if I can lay claim to some of the former, I certainly cannot lay claim to much of the latter! Still, yes, I do think that literary qualifications are important. Not only literary, but scientific, legal, theological and historical qualifications. In a sense, a fully-fledged secularist propagandist should probably have a science degree, a degree in divinity, be a barrister, and have a competent historical apparatus. This is not snobbery. It is because the case demands it. We are dealing with highly technical subjects and we have highly trained opponents. The clergy, Roman and Anglican, are full-time professionals. If the standard of education of the Church of England cleric has declined, most Roman Catholic priests are graduates, and in the religious orders (of both men and women) exist facilities for continuous education. It takes, for instance, fifteen years to make a Jesuit. One cannot tackle legal reform, questions of evolution, doctrinal debate, or appreciate the (essentially a historic matter) growth and development of the churches, without a thorough grounding in these disciplines. But who can combine them in one person? Most of us can only hope to master one or two at most.

But freethought is not a class movement! The Catholic Church does not send Joe Noggins, who left boarding school at 14, to debate with Bertrand Russell! But she finds a place for him. One of the things which disturbs me, in the contemporary freethought world, is the fact that the 1944 Education Act has had the effect of drawing off the working class intellectual into white collar professions and Redbrick lectureships, so that we increasingly lack the thoughtful working class man who abounded in, e.g., the Mechanics' Institutes of the 19th century. The workers are losing their natural intellectual leaders. Read the propaganda published for the aspiring plebeian secularist in the 1860s. Pretty strong meat, some of it, and tough going. But there was no TV to distract!

But why does Mr. Ead call himself semi-literate?

If he is semi-literate, all I can say is that I'd rather be as half-literate as he is, as this very thoughtful man is, than some of the whole-literate academics I can think of! I cannot say what the deficiencies of his formal education may have been, but how right he is. Sex (normal and perverse) are secondary questions. Do not waste time in abuse. Be positive. Produce our own morality. But can our own morality flourish if the churches and their influence are not first weakened and then finally destroyed? I think not. The tragedy is, in the freethought world today, there seems to be no means and no person, to unite people of differing levels of education, so that each and all can make their contribution inspired by the one essential attribute of an honest atheist, integrity of purpose to stop the spread of superstition and make man happy for ever in this, the world of all of us.

(Miss) GILLIAN HAWTIN

SUNGODS AND MESSIAHS

THE recent articles by George R. Goodman on "Sungods and Messiahs" that have appeared in two issues of THE FREETHINKER, while being of interest, have contained a number of errors which invalidate the claims made by the author.

Mr Goodman takes a great deal of his material from an American writer, Dr A. B. Kuhn, he in his turn draws from the English writer Gerald Massey. Both Goodman and Kuhn seem completely unaware that since Massey wrote his very fine works a great deal has happened in the world of pre-classical studies.

Mr Goodman has much to say about Horus, in common with Kuhn he makes no effort to distinguish which Horus he means, as there are at least fourteen known it is very important to specify which of them one is referring to. Confusion in regard to Horus is even exhibited in Egyptian texts and scholars have found a number of inscriptions that indicate this. Consequently it is meaningless to refer to Horus as the "ever-coming-one", further, the claim that *Iusa* is an earlier name for Horus is just not true.

Iu, we are told, is the verb "to come". This might be so in the case of another language but not in Egyptian, transliteration of the Egyptian verb "to come" gives *iwt* or *it* (sometimes *itit*). Mr Goodman is, of course, following Kuhn who makes the same claims on page 544 of his book *The Lost Light*, when the American author states that *sa* means "son" Mr Goodman repeats it, as Kuhn also claims *sa* stands for "successor, male heir or prince" we also find his English (?) follower claiming it. Unfortunately

(for Mr Goodman) the Egyptian for "son" is *s3*, the nearest equivalent to *sa* or *se* is *s* ("se") but this stands not for "son" but "man". "Prince" is transliterated *rp'ty* not, as Dr Kuhn and Mr Goodman would have *sa*. It should be clear now that *Iusa* cannot be advanced as meaning "son of the divine father Iu", in fact it is doubtful if the word as presented has anything to do with Egypt.

Earlier in his article (THE FREETHINKER, November 26th) Mr Goodman tells us that Christos is derived from the Egyptian KaRaST (Karest, Kerast), "the name of the mummy prepared for burial". In this we again find Mr Goodman following Dr Kuhn, though the American author does not go quite that far, opting instead for there only being a "suggested closeness". However, the case advanced by Dr Kuhn and Mr Goodman at this point hinges on KaRaST, or as Kuhn puts it, KRST, being the Egyptian word to designate the mummy, unfortunately as with all too many of the claims it turns out that Kuhn, and following him, Mr Goodman, are in error. The Egyptian designation for a mummy prepared for burial is *wl*. The conclusion that must be drawn from this is clear and requires no further comment from me.

Mr Goodman's article, which amounts almost to a stringing together in another form of much that Kuhn writes and certainly does not represent any original research on Goodman's part, stresses the importance of checking sources. Some writers would do well at times to bear in mind the importance of research rather than repeating what others write, this might mean we hear less from them but when we do we could be sure that it contained something worthwhile.

R. W. MORRELL

ABORTION FOR MORE THAN BILLS

It is encouraging that the House of Lords has given a second reading to Lord Silkin's Abortion Bill, albeit with reservations. Many of the criticisms seem, however, less valid than the original proposals, whatever formal rewriting may be needed.

Too many controls may frustrate the whole purpose of the measure, which has perhaps occurred to some of their Lordships. Consulting the father, as the Bishop of Southwark suggests, might lead to difficulties if he were not to be found and to injustice if he unreasonably refused to give consent. A reasonable suspicion of rape should be enough justification for abortion without waiting for a jury to decide. While it is desirable that every effort be made to see if the mother might want to keep her baby if domestic circumstances were changed, National Assistance got, or anxiety state treated, it would be unfortunate if too large a committee had to give unanimous approval. This would involve the probability of including a Roman Catholic to make a dogmatic rather than therapeutic decision, and delay in the operation, which would increase the risk to the mother.

An abortion may not be exactly like any other operation. The mother may suffer regrets afterwards in a way unlikely to accompany appendectomy. But then she may after cosmetic surgery. Some doctors may have a real conscientious objection to performing an abortion and should be excused. An abortion may not be as directly related to health as some other operations, where the patient already finds it difficult to obtain a hospital bed. But most, perhaps all, of these considerations result from the adverse climate of opinion surrounding the subject and the inadequacy of hospital services. They are not the fault of the unfortunate women wanting abortion and now threatened with the law or the castigation of bigoted doctors and nurses.

It may be argued that applicants are thoughtless or careless. This may be said of many accident victims, but they are not on that account refused treatment. It may be said that it is a costly and onerous duty providing so many "unnecessary" operations. It is more costly and onerous, and involves more human misery, trying to patch up the results of back-street abortions. For a determined woman will get her abortion whether with the aid of drugs, Lord Vaux's "knitting needle", falling downstairs, Sairey Gamp or Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington. It is argued by some, usually Catholics, that the act is murder. In the light of the religious wars and capital punishment of history it may be questioned whether this is even good theology. It is certainly curious physiology and psychology. No doubt some clerical casuist would have found a way out if cardinals had ever needed to avail themselves of the facility.

Clearly no one wishes to encourage abortions. Better for better contraception to have been available. Better for the community to be more sympathetic to unmarried mothers, which might encourage more girls to have their babies. Better for more and better hospitals and doctors to be available. But in the last analysis this is, or should be, a matter for the personal conscience of the woman involved. It is the duty of the Government to recognise that right and sponsor something like Lord Silkin's Bill.

DAVID TRIBE

President, National Secular Society

SAVING CLAUSE

I MEAN no offence to anyone; but may I instance the old lady churchgoer who always bowed at the name of Satan: "Just in case"?

Your present policy of "scholarly", reverent references to a pure myth and a Christian commercial, impels me, although taught "manners" in my infancy, to ask whether the logical end of manners isn't nullity?

ARTHUR E. CARPENTER

PRO-FEMALE

THIS is in answer to the letter by Mr. R. Smith published by THE FREETHINKER, October 29th. This is a typical egotistical "superior male" position. Mr. Smith's attack on Mrs. Kit Mouat as anti-male is beneath contempt. Mrs. Mouat is not anti-male, she is pro-female and it is about time someone was. If Kit Mouat is anti-male, her "complex" did not prevent her from getting married and raising a child.

As to the snobbish remark by Mr. Smith, "Where are all the women philosophers?", let me ask Mr. Smith if he ever read a history book? Women were held in contempt and literal slavery for centuries, sold, abused, used for pleasure and discarded. Where would man be, Mr. Smith, if he suffered as badly as women? They were not allowed to read or write, attend school or compete in business. Even so, a few women crossed the line to mental freedom. (1) Aspasia (470-410 BC) while not, I admit, a philosopher, was known for her genius and political know-how. (2) Hypatia (370-415 AD), Greek philosopher, daughter of the mathematician Theon. She was a lecturer on mathematics and her judgment was so respected that students from foreign lands learned under her. City magistrates of Alexandria consulted her on important cases. She was the undisputed leader of the Neoplatonic school of philosophy. She was the author of commentaries on ancient astronomical and mathematical works. She was murdered by a mob of Christians led by Bishop Cyril. Your own Bertrand Russell has praised her highly. Do you wish to debate him on women philosophers, Mr. Smith?

The last one I will mention is Ayn Rand of the USA, author of *Atlas Shrugged*, *The Fountainhead*, *We the Living*, etc. Her ideas have inspired profound admiration. She is the originator of a daring philosophy, Objectivism, which challenges fundamental beliefs. She is also a lecturer and is happily married. As for Kit Mouat, I only wish there were more women like her. So grow up, Mr. Smith, male superiority is as dead as the dodo bird.

MACE MCCARTHY

(New York City)

Books of Interest

Ten Non-Commandments *Ronald Fletcher* 2s. 6d. postage 5d.
The Thinkers Handbook *Hector Hawton* 5s. postage 8d.
The Humanist Revolution *Hector Hawton* 10s. 6d. postage 8d.
Pioneers of Social Change *Royston Pike* 15s. postage 10d.
The Origins of Religion *Lord Raglan* 2s. 6d. postage 6d.
Man and His Gods *Homer Smith* 13s. 6d. postage 10d.
The Rights of Man *Thomas Paine* 9s. 6d. postage 1s.
Thomas Paine *Chapman Cohen* 1s. postage 3d.

Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought *Chapman Cohen* 3s. postage 6d.

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The Freethinker

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PROFESSOR OLIVIER LUTAUD — who will not have been forgotten by those who were at the World Union of Free-thinkers' Congress at Beatrice Webb House in September, 1961, for his mastery of English and Cromwellian literature, as for his geniality, and who will be one of the speakers at the next international Freethought congress on September 2nd-5th, 1966, in London — gave me recently a little book, *Les Communards*, by M. Winock and J. P. Azema, published by Editions du Seuil, Paris.

I have read it with deep interest, and can recommend it to readers with a knowledge of French and an interest in the last century. In September, 1872 Charles Bradlaugh took his daughters, Alice and Hypatia both to a school in Paris. And it was there Alice remained for a year, but Hypatia, falling ill, did not return after the Christmas holidays. Nevertheless, these three months left indelible memories of which she occasionally spoke in later years. Paris had not yet recovered from the destruction caused, first by the Prussian bombardment during the siege, second by the cannon of Mont Valérien during the civil war, and lastly by the wild destruction in the last few days of the expiring Commune. For my grandfather these visits to Paris were overshadowed by profound sorrow and regret, for in the Commune he had lost several good and respected friends. For him the whole affair had been a tragedy, hopeless from the first.

Not Forgotten

Nearly ninety-five years have passed since then; there can be very few still alive with any first-hand recollection of those far-off days. Nevertheless, the Commune has not been forgotten in France, and from time to time May 24th is celebrated at the Wall of the Fédérés.

The Commune was a milestone in social history. It is, I think, worth while recalling, even if briefly, what happened then.

In July, 1870, Napoleon III, called by Victor Hugo, *Le Petit*, who, by craft, had wrecked in 1852 the Republic and by ruthless murder made himself Emperor, was foolish enough to declare war on Prussia. Bismarck and Moltke could have asked for nothing better. In two months the Prussians had overwhelmed the French armies, taken Napoleon prisoner and invested Paris. On September 4th, a new Republic was proclaimed in Paris and a Government of National Defence was formed under General Trochu, an unfortunate choice, as he had not the slightest idea what could be done by way of defence. The impelling personality was a little man, Gambetta, who escaped from besieged Paris in a balloon and reformed the government at Tours. A government which, it may be noted, sent a letter to Bradlaugh thanking him for the vigorous propaganda he was making on behalf of the new Republic. Army after army was raised against the Prussians but, ill-equipped and untrained as they were, marched only to defeat at the hands of the expert Prussians. In the meantime, Thiers and Favre opened negotiations

with Bismarck — negotiations, no, Bismarck was prepared to dictate terms, not to discuss them. The Trochu government finally accepted these terms and on January 24th, 1871, an armistice was signed, and Gambetta fled to Spain.

In Paris there was much heart searching. The wealthy and conservative elements of the population escaped as best they could, especially when the Prussian artillery opened fire on January 5th. In October 1870 there had been manifestations by the battalions de gauche under Flourens, the ex-university professor, against the parleys with Bismarck, and feelings had risen to such a point by October 31st, that there were the beginnings of a revolt. The Hotel de Ville was invaded whilst the government was in session there, and many cries of "Vive la Commune!"; there was talk of forming a Committee of Public Safety. Much talk, but no decision.

Many Meanings

What did they mean by *La Commune*? It is to be doubted if many of those who cried it had any clear notion. It was a "mystique", a slogan, a millenium. For a Marxist it meant the dictatorship of the proletariat. For an anarchist it meant the destruction of the State, including the proletarian despotism; it meant the formations of small autonomous groups which could co-operate where and when needful. For many Parisians it meant getting rid of those conservative, pro-Prussian, or bonapartist or monarchist obstructionists and fighting against the Prussians. For Louis Blanqui, at this time serving some of his 37 years in jail, and his followers it meant just destruction of all obstacles to that ultimate freedom out of which would come the earthly paradise.

For a while nothing came of all this but talk. The Prussians entered Paris, took over the eastern fortifications and waited. A new French National Assembly was elected and met at Bordeaux. Thiers, once a Liberal, became chief minister. The Assembly was composed largely of provincials, and included a monarchist majority. In Paris the National Guard (there was the Garde Nationale mobile, *moblots* of men under 35, and the Garde Nationale Sédentaire, over 35) established a Federation with a Central Committee of control, distinct from the military control. They were henceforward to be known as *les fédérés*. Practically all Parisian men had received rifles, mostly out-of-date, and ammunition; the National Guard had also several batteries for the defence of the city, and these were to be a source of trouble. They had, apparently, been bought by the Parisian Guard with money collected from the people.

Thiers and his government returned to Paris on March 16th, 1871, but not for long. An order was given for the above-mentioned cannon to be removed from their positions and taken over by the Army. This the Parisians would not tolerate. A National Guardsman on duty was shot dead by the soldiers sent to take away the guns. This was a signal for a general call to arms of the Fédérés.

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Paris Commune of 1871

By C. BRADLAUGH BONNER

Amid rapidly growing excitement, Thiers and his ministers fled to Versailles. General Lecomte at the head (?) of a brigade ordered his men to fire on the crowd. They refused. The Fédérés arrested the General, and imprisoned him at 6 rue des Rosiers, where he was joined by General Clement Thomas, ex-chief of the National Guard, a man who was much disliked. A mob formed and, despite the efforts of the guard, dragged away the two generals and shot them. This was the signal for the civil war.

Formations of the Communes

Ten days later, on March 28th, the Paris Commune was formed by democratic vote; it was just a parliament to legislate and accomplish municipal freedoms, similar to our County Councils.

Other Communes, similarly municipal councils, were formed about the same time at Lyons, Marseilles, Narbonne, Toulouse and St. Etienne. They were all crushed by the military in a few days.

The military situation in Paris was roughly thus. The Prussians held the eastern defences. The Thiers government, or the Versaillais as they were called, were attacking along the western edge of the city. The western parts were also the richer quarters, inhabited largely by sympathisers with the Versaillais, many of whom had left before the siege or left hurriedly following the example of the Thiers ministry. The Government held the dominating fort of Mont Valérien, from which they could bombard the city at will.

The Commune held out for two months. There was no lack of bravery; but there was no one man capable of command, no real leader acceptable to all. In the first week Flourens was captured and slaughtered. One by one the forts held by the Fédérés were taken. On May 21st the Versaillais entered the city and then ensued *La Semaine Sanglante*, the Week of Blood. In every street the Parisians built up barricades and fought to the end. Some of the barricades were held by women only. The soldiery shot every man, woman or child they could catch, including some of their own side. The communards in fury shot all their prisoners and set fire to every building that the soldiery did not leave in flames. The hideous nightmare finished in a strange battle among the tombstones in the great cemetery of Père-Lachaise. It is estimated that 25,000 died in those few days.

According to the victors the communards (who called themselves *communeux* — the ending *-ard* is abusive) were beasts of indescribable habits. In truth they were not. Despite the bombardment there reigned a happy serenity. Rationing was well organised, though there was a shortage of meat. Supplies were cut off from the west, but could be obtained from the east, for the Prussians were neutral in this civil war. Concerts were held almost daily, some for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the fallen fédérés. The schools were kept running and even a new school established for girls; and, of course, hospitals. As for newspapers, they multiplied endlessly, and their editorials were lyrical. There seemed to be no awareness of the imminent catastrophe. The Freemasons (Grand Orient and also freethinking) proceeded in solemn procession, banners flying, grave music playing, to the line of battle and placed their banners in the most exposed spots.

Much to his astonishment, Bradlaugh was requested by the Gambetta government to come to France and act as intermediary between the Commune and Thiers; the terms he was empowered to offer were clearly set out. He received this request as he was about to set out for a course of lectures in Scotland. Instead he took the train

for Dover. At Calais he was arrested by order of the Thiers minister, Jules Favre, and taken to Boulogne, where he was detained under a guard of three policemen. The next morning he was accused of presiding over a meeting in Hyde Park in favour of the Commune, which he had not done; of stirring up revolution in Prussia, where he had never been, and told he was a rallying point for dangerous men. Telegraphing to Jules Favre, he received a reply that he was to leave France without delay, which he did. After the fall of the Commune he again had occasion to visit Paris, and was again arrested at Calais, but after three days' detention was allowed to continue his journey. The Calais Commissary showed him the order (which had not been cancelled) that Mr Bradlaugh was to be prevented from entering Paris at any price.

Many of the communards who escaped from Paris after May 28th, 1871, came to London. As they were destitute, Bradlaugh gave a series of lectures, the proceeds of which were handed to the treasurer of *La Fraternelle*, the society which these unfortunates formed for their mutual benefit. A mean lie was circulated in the London press that the refugees had refused to accept anything from Bradlaugh.

The Commune will not be forgotten. If the French Revolution of eighty years earlier was a great step forward for *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, it was the bourgeoisie which mostly benefited. The Commune, though it failed disastrously, was yet a step forward for the working classes.

Boozers

By DENIS COBELL

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS was founded at Arkon, Ohio, USA, in 1935 by two staunch members of the Oxford Group (later known as Moral Re-Armament — an organisation I examined critically in *THE FREETHINKER*, 28/2/64). They built AA on a dual principle: dependence on "life-changing" techniques adopted from the Oxford Group, and the theory that alcoholism occurs only in a particular allergic condition. Expert opinions deny the validity of both premises. Religious conversion, although possible, is not a practical method of treating alcoholism; AA only appeals to those who are able to swallow its pseudo-religious atmosphere, and gloating accounts of past excesses, which AA members love to indulge in at their meetings, over cups of tea. Furthermore, their theory of alcoholic allergy is completely unscientific. These views, plus counsel towards a fuller understanding of our fellow creatures are expressed in a recent book, *Alcoholism*, by Neil Kessel and Henry Walton (Penguin, 4s.).

Alcohol is a useful agent in promoting people's ability to socialise; inhibition is reduced and tension relieved, but the speed of reactions is also slowed down. Teetotallers, who form only 30 per cent of Britain's population, are very suspicious of the beneficial effects of alcohol; but almost everyone, drinker or abstainer, concurs in censure of the drunkard or alcoholic. Anyone who drinks enough alcohol will eventually become drunk, but its addictive powers are minute by comparison with opium. The part played by alcohol in artistic development, for example in Brendan Behan or Dylan Thomas, is questioned severely by these authors.

In 1952 the World Health Organisation described alcoholics as "those excessive drinkers whose dependence on alcohol has attained such a degree that they show a notice-

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The Five Saints of Leicester

By F. A. RIDLEY

I AGAIN recently had the pleasure of addressing the oldest secular society in England, the Leicester Secular Society. I do not think that there can be any radical platform in Great Britain that has had so long and distinguished a list of speakers since the official opening of the Secular Hall on March 6th, 1881, an occasion adorned by the presence and oratory of Charles Bradlaugh, G. J. Holyoake and other Secularists and Freethinkers of the period. Nor do I recall any of the (by this time innumerable) halls in which I have myself either spoken or been present that preserves so well the (for want of a better term) atmosphere of the early radical and pioneering days of the English Secular movement, as does the Leicester Secular Hall in Humberstone Gate. If one were inclined to subscribe to the dubious *mystique* of occultism, one could almost believe that the ghosts of Robert Owen and G. J. Holyoake still hovered over the Secular Hall. For both these great pioneers were closely associated with the origins of secularism in Leicester; to be sure the descriptive term "secularism" was itself coined by G. J. Holyoake and in the self-same year, 1853, that the name, the Leicester Secular Society, was first officially used.

That learned historian and former secretary of the Leicester Secular Society, the late F. J. Gould, informs us in his official *History of the Leicester Secular Society* that some kind of an organised secular and radical movement had been in existence in Leicester since the French Revolution. Indeed, the Revolution Club ante-dated that event, for it was founded in 1785 in order to commemorate William III and the Glorious Revolution of 1688-9. And the present Society dates back uninterruptedly to 1853, thirteen years before the official foundation of the National Secular Society.

The Leicester Secular Society is certainly the oldest secular society in Great Britain and if there is an older one anywhere in the world, we have not yet been made aware of it.

The most arresting, not to say intriguing, adjunct of the now eighty-four-year-old hall is to be found in the five busts which surmount the entrance. If one were disposed towards religious analogy, one would almost be inclined to term them the patron saints of the honourable building over which they preside. But were we to make (at first sight tempting) comparison, the result would be somewhat curious; perhaps, indeed, incongruous would be the more apt and accurate description. For the views held and disseminated by these five eminent persons throughout the course of their earthly pilgrimages were, to put it mildly, dissimilar. They are: Jesus, Robert Owen, Thomas Paine, Socrates and Voltaire; surely about as composite a quintet as could be found on any building of any kind in Great Britain.

Let me proceed to examine this sacred assembly in more appropriate detail. (1) Jesus — a Jew (or a god): probable date, if any, first century AD; professional revivalist (previously worked as a carpenter); executed by Pontius Pilate and rose again on the third day. Present (posthumous) occupation — Second Person of the Trinity. (2) Owen, Robert — English (or rather Welsh). Socialist, Atheist and Utopian. Born and died in Newtown, Montgomery, North Wales (1770-1858). May perhaps be termed the founder of British Socialism, as also of the Leicester Secular Society, and as such visited Leicester and lectured there. (3) Paine. Thomas (1732-1809) —

born in Thetford and died in USA. English republican, radical and anti-Christian Deist and biblical critic. Took part in three major Revolutions, in America, France and England — the last of which failed to ignite despite his efforts. Principal published works: *The Age of Reason* and *The Rights of Man*. Corresponded with Leicester (Cf F. J. Gould, p. 47), but never apparently visited it. (4) Socrates — Greek philosopher; born and died (judicially murdered) in Athens, 5th century BC. Career and character at least partly legendary and due to his pupil Plato, who recorded (or invented?) his teaching. For example, the two contemporary accounts of Socrates by his pupils, Plato and Xenophon, differ considerably as do the extant biographies of Jesus. According to Plato, Socrates was a Deist and perhaps the first philosopher to formulate a rational defence of human immortality. May, perhaps, like his pupil be termed a Christian before Christ, as Nietzsche described Plato. (5) Voltaire (real name Arouet). French writer, wit, critic and probably best known as a satirical writer. (1695-1778.) Born and died in France. Was for long an exile in Switzerland. Outspoken critic of both the Catholic Church and the French feudal *ancien regime*. Best known work, *Candide*, a satire on the philosophy of Leibniz. A Deist, resided in England for some time and wrote a book on the English, *Letters on the English*.

Such, in briefest outline, are the "five saints" of Leicester. Evidently they form a pretty heterogeneous quintet: a Jewish preacher, a Welsh socialist, an English radical, a Greek philosopher, and a French satirical writer. Surely no institution was ever placed under such an eminent and eminently varied set of patrons.

The first question that must occur to the visitor to the Secular Hall in Humberstone Gate is, why Jesus? Owen, Paine and Voltaire are all in the (if one may employ such a contradictory term) the orthodox radical tradition. Even Socrates (at least to those not too well-versed in the evolution of Greek philosophy) might conceivably pass as a Humanist; after all, even Voltaire and Paine were Deists and believers in a personal God and in human immortality. But Jesus? What has the Carpenter of Nazareth (or still less, the Second Person of the Trinity) to do with the oldest secular society in Great Britain? To answer this I turn to the well-documented pages of the late F. J. Gould. After describing the erection and opening of the present Secular Hall in 1881 he tells us: "In the carved capitals of the five stone pillars which carry the front on the ground storey are to be read the names of Socrates, Jesus, Voltaire, Thomas Paine and Robert Owen, and in corresponding niches above are placed terra cotta busts of these personages modelled by A. L. Vago."

So far, so good. But still, why Jesus? Here, Mr Gould comes directly to our assistance, for he proceeds to inform us as if in anticipation of our legitimate astonishment: "It is not to be supposed that the five worthies commemorated in the series of busts are chosen as the supreme teachers of Secular doctrine. They stand in a general way for wholesome criticism, for revolt against pretensions and for endeavours after a happier social environment. They are types of great moral and intellectual activities."

No doubt the above explanation is sufficiently satisfactory as regards four of the five Leicester "saints"; but again, what about the fifth? What moral and intellectual

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This Believing World

"WHEN PAUL TILLICH died the number of eminent American theologians was reduced to one—Reinhold Niebuhr," we were told, and on December 8th, the BBC presented another discussion about him between Sir E. Boyle, MP, the Rev. D. Jenkins and Canon R. Preston. *The result was really quite amusing.* Of course Niebuhr was a thorough Christian, but he was not really a theologian. In fact, nobody would call him even a biblical scholar. The two reverend gentlemen, as well as Sir Edward Boyle, thought he could properly be called a "secular Christian", or a "Christian Secularist." And a speech by Niebuhr himself, suggested such a confusion.

★

A SOUTH AFRICAN parson has actually "outlawed" dear old Santa Claus (or Father Christmas), on the grounds that he is "un-Christian" and "un-Afrikaans" (*Evening News*, 30/11/65) which is perfectly true. In fact, the Rev. W. A. Jooste claims he is a survival of Paganism and "detracts from the proper reverence of Christmas." Again the parson is right, but so long as there is a Christmas there will be a Santa Claus. After all, can anyone imagine "our Blessed Lord" slithering down a sooty chimney with a heavy load on his back, full of presents for the kiddies? It's almost blasphemy to think about it!

★

WE LEARN from the *South London Press* (19/11/65) the ruling of a doctor who was asked by the Rev. F. Bull of St. Paul's, Herne Hill, whether the communion cup, as it passed from mouth to mouth, made some of the drinkers of the Holy Wine think of poisonous germs. "There's no malice in chalice" was the finding. After all, it would be a bit thick to learn you could catch some ailment or disease when drinking the Blood of Jesus. In fact, we were told, there is greater risk of infection from merely talking to some people, than in eating the flesh of Jesus, or drinking his blood at the altar table. So that's that!

★

AND COMING again for the 1583rd time to the momentous problem as to whether Jesus did or did not die on the Cross (*Evening News*, 20/11/65) a research anthropologist, Dr M. Harner, "believes that Christ may not have died after all". It was certainly possible for Jesus to *seem* to die after taking vinegar, or a drug made from the mandrake.

★

THE MANDRAKE is mentioned in Genesis, though it requires an ardent believer to connect Jesus not dying on the cross with the plant just for this reason. However, Jesus either did or did not die on the cross. It's just as simple as that. But if he did not die on the cross this makes the Ascension perfectly feasible. Jesus came into the world as the result of a miracle; why, then, is there anything wrong with another miracle helping him out of it—as we believe was contended by Thomas Paine?

FORUM

RELIGION IN THE SCHOOL

Alliance Hall, Caxton Street, London, S.W.1, Tuesday, January 18th, 1966 7.45 p.m. Speakers include Ernest Armstrong MP, R. Gresham Cooke MP, David Tribe. Written questions to the organisers: National Secular Society, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

BOOZERS

(Concluded from page 410)

able mental disturbance or interference with their mental and bodily health, their interpersonal relations and their smooth social and economic functioning; or who show the prodromal signs of such developments." There is a vast difference between a heavy drinker and an alcoholic, although the dividing line may be crossed easily. Alcoholics are addicted, but they do not suffer withdrawal symptoms in the same manner as addicts to other drugs do.

The psychiatric disturbances found in alcoholics are not always the same, and the cause of alcoholism varies enormously from one person to another. Alcoholism is familial in certain instances, but there is also strong evidence to show that children brought up by rigid, puritanical teetotallers drink excessively later in life, as an act of rebellion.

Alcoholics Anonymous only caters for a certain type of alcoholic; the authors of this excellent study write, "this narrow approach does a serious disservice." Alcoholism affects the families of sufferers to a great extent, and unfortunately it is often considered in the wrong light. Medical practitioners do not always see the importance of effective treatment; they often advise the patient to "pull himself together"! Treatment of alcoholism is frequently not contemplated until physical disorders manifest themselves as a result of alcoholic poisoning.

Each alcoholic has his own history, and although the physical disorders, such as anorexia and gastritis or later cirrhosis of the liver and delirium tremens (DTs), may be the first to present, the doctor must regard psychiatric treatment on a more personal basis. This book gives details of the modern treatment of alcoholism with antabuse, and stresses the importance of psychotherapy during the follow-up stage after the patient's initial treatment in hospital. It deplores the facile reliance on the good offices of Alcoholics Anonymous in caring for the patient after discharge. Unfortunately, the final result of treatment is often poor; the adjustments required of the patient and his relatives are frequently ensnared with difficulties uneasy to overcome. Many alcoholics despair and commit suicide.

There is insufficient medical education for doctors on the subject of alcoholism. The advances that have been made in treating the condition are few, and have only been made within specialised units; treatment at most mental hospitals still remains largely custodial. A *Quarterly Journal of Studies in Alcoholism* has been published at Yale School of Alcoholic Studies to encounter this disinterest. The authors believe that too much confidence has been placed upon a few successful case histories issued by such bodies as Alcoholics Anonymous, who offer no statistics about the general success of their work.

The evangelistic fervour of AA produces a reliance upon the organisation as great as many already felt for drink itself! The authors make few constructive proposals to *prevent* the condition occurring, they pin their faith on hopes for better treatment in the future, but recommend increased taxation of spirits as a half-way measure. This might help to prevent accidents which surround the approaching Christmas season, as a result of drunken driving. Spirit drinking reached the highest peak for forty years in 1963 and the average family spends 13s. 6d. a week on alcoholic beverages in this country. Remembering this, there is little room for hypocrisy!

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Notes and News

THE second oration at the closing of the Council was also "apparently written by the Pope" (*The Guardian*, 9/12/65) but spoken in French by various cardinals told the world's rulers that the Church "asks of you only liberty. The liberty to believe and to preach her faith, the freedom to love her God and serve him." It told "the intellectuals that your paths are never foreign to ours"; and the artists that "If you are friends of genuine art, you are our friends." Women were no doubt pleased to hear that "The hour is coming, in fact, has come, when the vocation of women is being achieved with fullness." Whether it helped the poor, the sick and suffering to know that the Church's suffering was "increased at the thought that it is not within our power to bring you bodily help, nor the lessening of your physical sufferings," we can't say.

★

IN the past, the speech continued, there have been "regrettable misunderstandings" between the Church and the working man, which have "maintained a spirit of mistrust and lack of understanding between us." Today, the worker was informed, "the hour of reconciliation has sounded," and the Council invited him "to celebrate this hour without suspicion." How naïve can you get?

★

THE Vatican Secretariat of State is reported, however, to be initiating a new "opening out" phase towards the Communist countries (*The Observer*, 12/12/65), and a papal visit to Poland is contemplated for next May. Mgr Casaroli, the Pope's special envoy to East Europe, will go to Warsaw in January to prepare for the papal visit and to lay the ground for an agreement with the Polish

Government similar to that reached between the Holy See and Hungary. But Cardinal Wyszynski, the Primate of Poland, is expected to be away in Rome during Mgr Casaroli's mission. The Cardinal is a particularly obstinate man—"a considerable personality" is the *Observer's* euphemism—and well out of the way when tactfulness and diplomacy are called for.

★

ROMAN CATHOLICS may not know whether they can officially use contraceptives, but they have at least the Pope's permission to eat meat on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, which both fall on Fridays. A papal authorisation reported by Reuter on December 10th, permitted bishops to dispense their flocks from both fasting and abstinence on the two days. Our readers require no such dispensation and we have no power to grant it anyway. We must content ourselves with wishing them a merry Christmas, Yuletide, or whatever name they care to give to the Winter Solstice.

★

AN open-air ceremony in St. Peter's Square marked the end of the Vatican Council during which, we are told, the Roman Catholic Church came to terms with the modern world. Pope Paul was carried into the square on his portable throne, following a procession of 2,000 bishops clad in their special white conciliar robes and mitres. The Holy Father celebrated mass and delivered an oration; a second speech was then delivered by other bishops "in the name of the Council." The Pope's own speech in Italian, referred especially to those "brothers who are unjustly detained in silence, in oppression, and in the deprivation of legitimate and sacred rights owed to every honest man." But the "brothers" in question did not, we suspect, include those "unjustly detained" by such regimes as the Spanish and Portuguese—regimes which Pope Paul could particularly influence, if he so desired.

★

THE Polish Roman Catholic Church has been strongly criticised by *Zycie Warszawy* for sending an invitation to West German bishops to visit Poland next year on the occasion of the thousandth anniversary of Polish Christianity. The newspaper accused the hierarchy of failing to inform the Polish Ambassador in Rome of the invitation, which was extended during the Vatican Council; it stated that Cardinal Wyszynski, Archbishop Kominek and Bishop Machowski visited the Ambassador after announcing the invitation to the West German press, but did not tell him about it (*The Guardian*, 11/12/65). "Who are the Catholic bishops to whom the message has been addressed?" the newspaper asked. "They are the bishops who, together with the Bonn Government support the policy of revisionism and question our border on the Oder, Neisse and Baltic Sea. They include people who, in the time of Hitlerism, sided with the brown-shirted regime and blessed the German Wehrmacht marching against Poland."

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By OTTO WOLFGANG

Tutankhamen, Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, a Penguin Book, price 12s. 6d. (first published 1963.)

A NEW publication dealing with the most amazing period in the history of the most amazing people of Antiquity — the Ancient Egyptians — is, I think, superfluous unless it can add something new to solve the riddles posed by the Amarnan period. And on this score I am sorry I have to answer the question in the title in the negative. To rehash, once again, the story of the discovery of the Tomb of Tut-'ankh-Amon with its unique treasures was, at least in this country, not necessary. Hardly anything is known about the short reign of this young king, and the little we do know or presume to know hinges on too many question marks in the life of the founder of the Tell al-'Amarna heresy — Akhen-Aten or Ikhn-aton — and these riddles have been left unsolved in the book. Worse even, many quite plausible theories of late have been disregarded because they come from scholars who have not qualified as Egyptologists. And yet, one could publish a fascinating book on how many important discoveries were made by amateurs just because of their ability to think along non-conventional lines.

The definitive value of this paperback lies in its illustrations, in particular its 32 colour plates. They really are gorgeous.

The photographic reproduction of nature is not art; the real artist must abstract until merely the essence of what he wants to represent is left. The ancient Egyptians, starting from their hieroglyphic script, were past masters in this art of fundamental simplification. The Amarnan period, however, shows already the influence of Hellenic realism, and the marriage of these two tendencies renders the art production of this period particularly touching.

This goes also for the famous hymn to Aten, ascribed to Ikhnaton,* which gave rise to the romantic nonsense of his being a monotheistic reformator. But as said before, he is the kingpin of our understanding of the whole period — and he is the person we as Freethinkers would be most interested in. And just in this respect the text is very disappointing. The questions are being put and left unresolved; however, despite the author's frequent admission that she does not know the answers, she deliberately makes her choice and goes on from there. So for instance she says that the "highly-controversial question of a possible co-regency" (of Amenophis III and IV) remains a stumbling block and quite uncertain — yet she goes on and builds on this submission her whole story. Even more doubtful are the family relations which are treated as if they were established.

The 19th century educationalist, Pestalozzi, already taught that our mainspring is self-interest, even in the good-doer. (This in part explains the survival of religion even in Socialist countries, because of the expectation of some reward.) To take an up-to-date example: all preaching about integration is of no avail, unless you can show that the acceptance of immigrants serves points of self-interest.

All the conjectures about the idealistic aims of Amenophis IV, the Ikhnaton, are off the point, as I tried to show in a previous article (in the *Humanist* of May, 1958). Aten worship had existed long before the Ikhnaton and

the older Amenophis had already strongly favoured it; like the "Investiture Contest" between the German Emperor (Henry IV) and the Pope Gregory VII it was in fact a quarrel about spheres of influence and their spoils. The haggling that went on between Pius XI and XII and Hitler was a more recent case in point. Since about the middle of 12th dynasty the power of the kings had decreased in Egypt, while that of the Theban priesthood had grown beyond all proportions. There is no competition among pagan gods; but the Aten (sun globe) was something of an outsider, so it was chosen as a ramblock to dispose the mighty god of Thebes, Amon.

Nowhere in the whole book is mentioned the fact that Thebes was the name given by the Greeks to a city properly called UASET (the No-Amon of the Bible). And this — in connection with the oddity of a sphinx in a Greek legend — gave Immanuel Velikovsky the idea which he plausibly developed in his book, *Oedipus and Akhnaton* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1960), namely that Ikhnaton was the historical prototype of the Oedipus story (see my comments in the *Humanist* of April, 1963). It seems that Amenophis Junr. had been abroad before suddenly appearing to claim the throne. Then Amenophis Sen. died and his queen ruled from Ikhnaton's Aten-city, whereupon his favourite queen, Nefertete, mysteriously disappeared. Far from keeping his incestuous relations with his mother quiet, the mad king had bas-reliefs cut showing him in more or less compromising attitudes with Tiye, who bore him a daughter. At the same time he raped all his children, starting with Smenkh-ka-Re (whom our author considers his brother). When the tomb of the latter was found, the discoverer was amazed that the mummy had an apparently feminine pelvis; but at least in this connection our author admits that the corpse had been given the attitude preserved for the burial of royal concubines.

Velikovsky's theory can even explain why Smenkhare was hastily and untidily buried whilst all the treasures went to Tutankhamen; with him everything seems to fall into line and the least one could have expected from a later writer was to deal with this book in one way or another. Even more inexcusable perhaps is her omission of the observable fact of Ikhnaton's bodily deformity through progressive lipodystrophy. The 1930 British Museum *Guide* to the Egyptian Collection already stated that Ikhnaton probably was "a pathological subject, hyper-nervous, and with an irritable brain . . . while at the same time his body degenerated. It is more than probable that he died mad . . . his daughters were made by an absurd flattery to look almost as grotesque as he; it was court fashion to admire the royal ugliness and imitate it."

NO FAIRY TALE

The tendency to over-emphasise Christmas as the children's festival sometimes hides the meaning of it for adults, says Canon George Lamb, Rector of Whickham.

He writes in his parish magazine that it is vitally necessary that we should learn that Christmas is no fairy tale.

"The festival of Christmas takes its meaning and the reason for its existence from the Christian doctrine of the incarnation," he says.

"This is the teaching that God has entered into our very life and shared all the experiences of which we are capable."

—*Newcastle Evening Chronicle* — (2/12/65)
Sounds suspiciously like a fairy tale to us, Canon.

* To flatter their oriental despots, court poets used to ascribe their best works to their own ruler. We have many similar instances from India, Judaea, etc. (e.g. Solomon).

A Billy Graham Reverie

By F. H. SNOW

I HAVE never seen Billy Graham in the flesh, and probably never will, so I availed myself of the opportunity of watching a film of a great meeting of his at Los Angeles Stadium, in the United States. The church hall in which the film was shown was full, the audience, as usual with religious meetings, mainly comprising the feminine sex. My home town of Folkestone would seem to have had small contact with sceptical views, like most provincial places, and the size of the attendance and the reverent singing of the hymns did not surprise me. The audience was an obviously church-going one, and the Billy Graham Crusade can have profited little from the show, save in the way of cash.

That goes, probably, for most of the American evangelist's meetings, to which, drawn by the man's notoriety, the religious and merely curious flock. It is unlikely that Graham's efforts, over all the years of his ministry, have effected any appreciable change in the vast society at which his eloquence has been directed. If he has caused ripples on its surface, they have had a brief existence. He fails to "light up" more than an infinitesimal proportion of the sinners on his own continent, and remains but a name in the world he so urgently wishes to redeem.

And yet, what a preacher he is! The word is inappropriate to him. As I watched the film in that church hall, he impressed himself upon me as a great personality. He is alive as I think few people are. His eyes gleamed with infectious optimism as, with animated gestures, he talked to his great audience, turning to all parts of the assemblage. His tones were very clear and strong, his words grammatical and well-conceived. In spite of his energetic notions and rapidity of speech, there was nothing suggestive of the ranter about him, and he conveyed the illusion of addressing himself to one personally.

For the short while that I listened to his recorded voice, Billy spoke almost non-stop, interestingly, appealingly, eloquently. With an open Bible in one hand, to which he referred as the indubitable Word of God, he stressed its Almighty author's love for His sinning children, and treated his hearers to seek the glorious salvation He offered them. It was the usual stuff, with a vast difference. Nothing could have been less sermon-like than what I heard of that address. The man's personality dominated it. He spoke with terrific conviction, and appeared to personify the happiness he advocated. I felt that, of all men's lives, Billy Graham's was surely the happiest.

Reflecting upon the film, on my way home, I was freshly impressed with the American evangelist's power to influence those unarmed with the weapons of critical thought. Had I been young, my emotional self would have been enthralled by this master of the art of Christian propaganda — albeit, in my view, a sincerely artless one. It was, indeed, the sincerity of Billy Graham's eloquence which was its most captivating feature, allied with the supreme confidence of the smile that played about his lips. I could well imagine that to anyone ignorant of the salient weaknesses of the Christian creed, or even the unintelligently doubting, Graham's message would stamp itself with the hall-mark of truth.

Why, then, had not his heaven spread far beyond its nucleus? With the advantage of two thousand years of Christian teaching, and the virtual unacquaintance of the

masses with the sceptical viewpoint, why had not Graham's dynamic gospelling kindled a spiritual blaze? Bluntly because, having due regard to the modern secularising trend, religious fervour is unnatural to the great bulk of humanity, especially in the western world. Even in the heyday of revivalism, the masses remained unkindled by devotional fire, and the great majority of converts became "damp squibs". It is just contrary to most people's natures to get spiritually lit up, still more to remain so. The zealot is exceptional, even amongst the religiously emotional Catholics, who, like members of other faiths, are transiently warmed and, away from the mystic influence of priest and church, remarkably unspiritual.

So the good Lord for whom Billy works has provided him with material almost entirely unsuitable for his job. Is it that the good Lord is content with the tepid homage accorded him by the aggregate mind? In which case Billy, like all the revivalists that ever were, is under a hallucination, which provides him with rapture, but effects little more. If only a flame of love could sweep the world, through the agency of whatever religious personality, I would acclaim it, though it meant perpetuation of the superstition of the sky god. The resultant breakdown of ideological hates, the outlawing of wars, the upgrading of the lowly, the relief of the starving and oppressed, I would account more important than the emancipation of humanity from its hoary misbeliefs.

As man's make-up precludes the possibility of such a conflagration, and religious propaganda, even through the medium of the inimitable Graham, is inefficacious to deflect men's minds from narrow self-interests and corrupting engrossments to zeal for the welfare of their human brethren and the promotion of global peace and goodwill, these ideals can only be realised through secularism.

Plainly, the world has need of a humanist crusade. The material which the finest religious oratory fails to set aglow, is potentially receptive of the sceptical viewpoint. The very nature that resists religious ravishment would readily respond to reason's appeal, if made cognisant of it through a great acceleration of rationalism's sedate progress. After the first rude shocks to their religiously-indoctrinated mentalities, the generality of people would, experience assures me, be intrigued by the case against God, and its humanitarian objectives. There would be no surge towards a lofty ethical state, but the creation of a thinking public would bring much nearer the triumph of secular principles.

Billy Graham is having a wonderful time, blissfully blind to the impotence of his burning eloquence to salvationist society. Humanism must comprehend the full potentiality of its appeal. With unhindered propagation, it would find immense response from the truth-starved, and prove that the "dead horse" of old-fashioned scepticism is the liveliest menace to the superstitious faiths that disgrace our twentieth-century civilisation.

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Evening prayer of a Catholic lady

"Blessed Lady Mary, thou who gavest birth without sinning, grant that I may sin without giving birth."

—Swedish weekly *Aktuellt* (29/10/65)

THE FIVE SAINTS OF LEICESTER

(Concluded from page 411)

activities was Jesus responsible for? Evidently the Leicester Christians of 1881 vintage shared our astonishment, for Mr Gould goes on to tell us: "Of course the bracketing of Jesus with Freethinkers such as Voltaire, Paine and Owen caused much searching of hearts in the town." "I was considerably surprised and shocked," wrote an indignant correspondent to a local paper, "to see the name of Jesus in such a position, and I am altogether at a loss to find how the Secularists can claim him as a teacher and expounder of their views of life."

This critic was not alone in his surprise. For soon after, a popular Leicester preacher edified his congregation with remarks on the five busts. The real prophets of Secularism, he averred, were Owen, Paine and Voltaire. And the preacher was somewhat mystified at the respect shown to Jesus by the Secularists. "I suppose," he said, "there is something in the life and teachings of Jesus which even in them [sic] awakens a dim perception of the beautiful and true." The clergyman ended his discourse by complaining that Secularism robbed man of "that truest in the unseen and that hope of immortality which is the mainspring of all noble endurance and work".

This outburst was soon followed by one of an even more pontifical character by Canon Vaughan, a notable figure in Leicester religious circles. Alluding to the promoters of Secularism, he said: "Even if they themselves feel able to resist the enervated, demoralising influence involved in their denials or disavowals of God and immortality, and to live virtuous and honourable and useful lives in the strength of or in spite of their own agnostic principles, yet who can doubt what the tendencies of those denials and disavowals must be, and that from the new Hall in Humberstone Gate there will radiate ugly vices most injurious to morality amongst us."

To this cascade of denunciation aroused presumably by the Secularist appropriation of Jesus, Mr Josiah Gimson, then President of the Society, rejoined that "Jesus enjoined the performance of right actions towards our fellow-men as our first duty and that *his* gospel was moral rather than theological and therefore secularist".

Not a very convincing reply! On the whole, the Leicester Christians would appear to have had some ground for their complaints.

CORRESPONDENCE

SUNGODS AND MESSIAHS

LINGUISTICALLY Mr. Goodman's last contribution (26/11/65), I am sorry to say, is a hotchpotch of half-truths and outright howlers; one of the worst blunders was his lumping together of theophoric names (such as Isa-iah) with "Messiah" (Hebr. *Māshiyakh*). The most elemental knowledge is that a Hebrew root consists of three letters; therefore his playing about with la, lu, etc., doesn't mean a thing. The root is in one case J.H.W, and in the other the root is M.Sh.Kh = to smear, anoint; quite apart again from M.Sh.H. = to draw out, deliver (Moses).

Further: Krishna was not an "anointed" Messiah and has etymologically nothing else in common with Christos but a similarity in sound that is accidental. Krishna has a short *ri*, hence Mr Goodman starts already from a wrong premise for *kri*, dropping altogether an explanation where the remaining *-shna* is to come in. How often must it be said; Krishna = the Dark One (and not a Christos). In the *Bhagavadgītā* he reveals himself as the Supreme Spirit, the one God, hidden in all things but pervading all. When after his revelation to *Arjuna* he again assumes human form, he says: "I cannot be seen in this [human] form by anyone but you [whom I have initiated]."

Mr Goodman's derivations from Greek (chrysalis — properly from chrysos = gold) and latin (crux, cross — crusta — crust

etc) are too ludicrous to be dealt with. And his information about Egyptian he might have gathered from Theosophists.

Ka is the inner person, self but the mummy = *qas* or *qasiu*. Who or what are his "Anup and Aan (or Taht-Aan)," is the latter to be Taueret, the hippopotamous goddess, equated with Hathor, the goddess of the dead in the desert? Anup is the Jackal-god and a local deity of the necropolis at Abydos. Perhaps G. or somebody else mixed them up with the brothers *Anpu* and *Batau* of the D'Orbiney Papyrus — the tale after which the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife was modelled in the Old Testament. Again the equation with Hermes is far fetched.

That Egyptian Sa, Se etc, is "quite often ... with the ... masculine f, like Saf, Sef ... meaning son ... etc" is a half-truth at best. We have *se -a* = son mine; "f" is the masculine suffix of the third person only (derived from *entuf* = he).

OTTO WOLFGANG

PIUS XII

AS AN answer to Mr. S. G. Knott's question to me re Pope Pius XII and the Abyssinian War, I would like to cite the following paragraph from the book of Nazareno Padellaro, *Portrait of Pius XII* (Dent), page 110, where he says:

"There are some who maintain that the Secretary of State [Cardinal Pacelli was not yet Pope] should have taken advantage of this opportunity [namely, his meeting with President Roosevelt] to allay the indignation of American Catholics at the Vatican's conciliatory attitude in the matter of the Abyssinian War. But this is a view that has no basis ... In any case, the Vatican's alleged attitude of appeasement towards Fascism is a myth; Pius XI and Cardinal Pacelli both saw in the conquest of Abyssinia a spark which might ultimately cause a worldwide conflagration."

I think no unprejudiced and well educated man can admit Mr. Knott's assertion. Pius XII was a very holy man, and a real defender of Peace, as one can see from his encyclicals. To the famous two questions proposed by St. Bernard: 'What would knowledge do without love? What would love do without knowledge?' Pius XII used to reply: 'Love would have no eyes, knowledge would be puffed up with pride.'

G. M. PARIS

[We must be prejudiced or badly educated.—ED.]

NO DANGER?

IN "Humanist Policy on RI" Margaret Knight uses the following phrase "Because of the danger that if the child later rejects Christianity he may throw out the moral baby with the mythological bath water ..."

What evidence is there of such a danger, seeing that practically every unbeliever has passed through such a phase with entirely the opposite result? Surely the ethical codes she herself describes as Christianity is the very thing we wish to eradicate in the rising generation.

The Christian moral code is bad and when thrown away with the mythological bath water there remains the natural moral code.

W. G. QUIGLEY

OBITUARY

ALFRED INESON who died at the age of 87 was an ardent Freethinker and Socialist, an active propagandist ever eager to espouse his views with a doggedness and good humour worthy of emulation. Literature, music and poetry (both as reader and writer) were his main interests and he was also a keen follower of "the summer game with the beautiful name".

Mr. Ineson had lived at Poole, but after the death of his wife in October, came North to stay with relatives in Moreton, and to them we offer our deep sympathy.

It was my privilege to pay tribute to the memory of this "happy warrior of Freethought" and to express the appreciation of the National Secular Society for his services, at the Birkenhead Crematorium on December 3rd.

W. COLLINS

Mrs. R. Leven-Book who died recently after a long illness had been a Freethinker reader and member of the National Secular Society for many years. She was cremated without ceremony at Golders Green Crematorium.

Details of membership of the National Secular Society and inquiries regarding bequests and secular funeral services may be obtained from the General Secretary, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1. Telephone: HOP 2717.

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IN ROME prior to the Christian era perhaps the most ancient religious cult was that of Janus, the two-headed god of time, and traditional guardian of the city from its foundation, usually dated from the year 754 BC. Janus, after whom the first month in our year is named, appears in the annals of the Pagan mythology to have fulfilled simultaneously these two principal functions. In the first capacity he was depicted as two-faced, with one face turned towards the future whilst the other was turned towards the past; but in his other function as the celestial guardian of Rome, Janus carried the keys of the Eternal City. This dual cult was, we repeat, in existence long prior to the Christian era; Janus Claviger (the bearer of the keys), was one of the oldest Roman Gods.

The Christian Key Bearer

In his well-known book, *The Evolution of the Idea of God*, Grant Allen aptly defined Christianity as a mausoleum of dead religions, for its theology represents a veritable museum taken from the Pagan faiths of antiquity. One of the more obvious, as well as striking of these loans made by Christianity from its chronologically Pagan predecessors, was the spectacular transformation of the Roman local god Janus into the first Christian pope St Peter, the traditional Prince of the Apostles and founder of the Papacy. For Peter, like his Pagan prototype Janus, is primarily a claviger (key bearer), and has inherited not only the keys of Rome, but the still more exalted keys of Heaven and Hell. As stated in the Gospel text, "Whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."

It is solely in virtue of this apostolic commission that (so the ecclesiastical tradition runs) Peter became the first pope and as such, exercised supreme jurisdiction over the universal Church, a supreme and infallible status that he has bequeathed to his successors. It is again solely by virtue of this commission of Christ to Peter that the present Pope, Paul VI, nineteen centuries after Peter's traditional arrival in Rome, still exercises the same universal hegemony over the city and the world. Once take away from the Vatican where Peter is traditionally buried "the power of the keys" (cf. Matthew 16, 19) and the Papacy as world history recognises it, would automatically cease to exist.

Mr Facing-Both-Ways

Today it would appear that the Papacy has also inherited the other principal characteristic of its Pagan prototype. Janus the divine key bearer was also the two-faced god of time, confronting simultaneously the future and the past. In a metaphysical sense at least, the present papal representative, Paul VI may be said to be doing just that in his recent announcement of the prospective canonisation of his two immediate predecessors, Pope Pius XII (1939-58) and John XXIII (1958-63). For not only in their personal characters and social antecedents (Pius was a Roman aristocrat whilst John was of humble peasant origin), but

even more fundamentally in their respective papal roles and mental outlooks these two Popes were about as diametrically opposed as any two could be within the common tradition of the Papacy.

Pius was the ultra-Conservative pro-Fascist Pope who (as Cardinal Pacelli) in 1929 signed the notorious Lateran Treaty with Mussolini, and later collaborated with Hitler and turned a blandly incomprehending ear to the appalling crime of genocide systematically applied by his Nazi allies in their concentration camps and gas chambers. Pius XII was, to paraphrase Lord Macaulay, the hope of the stern and unbending "Tories," the mediocrally-minded traditionalists in the Roman Curia. It can, we

imagine, to be taken for granted that had the Pacelli regime still been in existence under either Pius himself or a like-minded successor, the present Vatican Council would never have been held and the present ecclesiastical New Deal and New Look would never have been heard of.

These, like the Vatican Council itself, were the work of Pope John XXIII, who seems to have met with bitter opposition from the entourages of his predecessor and from traditionalists like Cardinal Ottaviani in the Roman Curia, when he announced his original programme of reform to be implemented by the Second Vatican Council.

From the above facts, it is surely clear that the two Popes now apparently due for canonisation stood at mutually opposing poles of the ecclesiastical universe: Pius as the most die-hard of traditionalists in every sphere; John as the most liberal pope and comprehensive ecclesiastical reformer in the modern annals of Papacy. Yet the career-diplomatist, Montini (Paul VI) is apparently about to raise both Popes simultaneously to the celestial hierarchy; no doubt in conformity with the evangelical injunction to combine the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove.

Rival Parties and Popes

Too many critics of the Church of Rome tend to take at their face value the grandiose claims to undeviating consistency and to monolithic uniformity that a certain type of Catholic apologist is so prone to assert. In actuality, of course, like every other organisation, Rome has always had contending factions and rival ideologies contending for supremacy. There have been many such internal conflicts in the course of the long evolutions of the Vatican. Conspicuous examples which come to mind are the long and bitter struggles that marked both the Councils of Trent (mid-16th century) and the First Vatican Council in 1869-70 (over in particular the then novel dogma of papal infallibility). As one of the most acute of recent critical students of modern Catholicism, Leo. H. Lehmann, himself an ex-priest, has commented: there have always been two rival parties in the Church of Rome, what we may perhaps call generically the conservative, and the liberal; standing respectively for the intransigent conservatism combined with a totalitarian attitude towards the secular world (ecclesiastical Fascism—the original type) and a

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

The Pope With Two Faces

By F. A. RIDLEY

readiness to move with the times and to compromise with the outside world.

These opposing points of view have often struggled bitterly at general councils and at papal conclaves, where liberal popes like Benedict XIV (to whom Voltaire dedicated a play) and Leo XIII alternated with die-hard reactionaries like the three ineffable Piuses—X, XI, XII. But it may be reasonably doubted whether there has ever been such a bitter and far-reaching conflict within the Church as has been raging at the Vatican ever since the accession of Pope John and his decision to recall the Vatican Council.

Let us be clear about this matter. Both Pacelli and Roncalli as the successive rulers of the greatest and most ubiquitous totalitarian power in recorded human annals were united in their determination to maintain and to augment the world-power of Rome. Upon that score there will be no real disagreement between these two prospective saints when they enter Heaven! But when we turn from ends to means, from strategy to tactics, their *terrestrial* policies were sharply dissimilar. For whilst Pius pursued an ultra-traditionalist policy, allying the before his election, which he probably owed to that fact),

Church with the *ancien regime* and the Fascist counter-revolution (he was the German expert of the Vatican Pope John recognised the current force of the winds of change as irresistible, and went to hitherto unheard of lengths at Rome in order to compromise with them.

As and when viewed in the perspectives of world-history, both these Popes sought to save and to strengthen their Church, but by sharply opposing strategy and tactics. If, in the phraseology of Dialectical Materialism, Pius was the "thesis", John represented his "anti-thesis". Now apparently their successor, the ex-diplomat Montini, is to effect the resulting "synthesis" by canonising both Popes simultaneously.

So far there have been comparatively few papal saints, no doubt due to the fact that the average pope is an administrator and man of affairs (and as such congenial to the Roman bureaucracy) rather than one conspicuous for learning and/or sanctity. Actually, the best popes *qua* popes, very rarely become saints; this distinction is reserved for bigoted morons like Pius X (1903-14), who was canonised recently. So Pius and John are not likely to meet many of their predecessors in the ranks of the heavenly hierarchy.

Christianity: Early Derivations and Future Intentions

By GILLIAN HAWTIN

THE earliest Christian churches (to use a small "c" for separated isolated communities), or the early Christian Church (if you prefer a big "C"), arose within the cradle of the *pax Romana* of the highly developed civilisation of the Empire of the Caesars. Though this was barbarous and oppressive in many ways, it should not be forgotten how high were its achievements in others; not only in material forms, such as architecture, but, for example, in legal organisation and administration. The Roman Empire fostered civic virtù; and when the small, secret Christian communities emerged from the catacombs it was by making use of the external apparatus of the Roman Empire that it at last began to make rapid headway.

You may believe, of course, that God prepared the Roman Empire as the vehicle to launch Christianity on Mediterranean civilisation and, hence, the world. After reading Gibbon you probably will not. Again, you may argue that government and the lamp of learning were preserved by the Church during the Middle Ages. After reading Coulton you probably will not. You may, instead, ask why, when the Church was perhaps most powerful, these ages were dubbed by a term to denote that they were intermediate between the enlightenment of the thirteen hundred years that Roman civilisation flourished, and the rebirth of the 13th century! On closer examination, highly developed institutions of the former were warped by the Church, during those "Middle" ages to an extent from which they have hardly yet recovered.

When Europe found out its tricks, the Churches had to look to "fresh woods and pastures new", and found them in the mission fields. They used, for the purpose of their evangelisation, schools and hospitals. This enabled them to pose as the patrons of learning and as the charitable doers of corporal works of mercy — in effect, they seized the minds of the young before they had developed, and

played on the fears of the dying in their dotage. From these so-called "social functions", a withdrawal — or, at least, a drastic modification of their activities — was forced upon them. The world had found them out. Science, rather than hocus-pocus, was seen to be the best available providence to man. Inductive thinking took the place of deductive logic, and objective observation of the realities of the universe replaced revelation.

The resultant breakaway from authority caused the Church to rent its garments, and lament that the people rushed vainly after every new idea, instead of bowing in obedience to Holy Church. Heresy was the fault of the individual and schism the fault of the new national churches. The attempt to cling to Christianity and adapt it to the changing views of the world around us, is not as new as the Bishop of Woolwich, or *Objections to Roman Catholicism*. Then once more the Church cast her arms abroad "for agony and loss". For only if one believes in a central teaching Authority (and here we insist on a big "A"), is it considered so very wicked to embrace even, perhaps, secular ends, and only if one believes in a central deposit of Christian truth, can such churches be considered to depart widely from some such norm.

Nevertheless, modern culture and society are striving more and more to be rooted in valid economic, sociological and scientific observation. Truth is seen to be relative within a general ambit of ignorance. In this climate, the Churches have been forced back from totalitarian assertion to a fresh wooing of the people. If they have become "voluntary associations" (i.e. non-necessary societies within society — to use the terms of Catholic sociology), it is not because they are essentially any more liberal, or changed in nature. They have not abandoned their claims. This is merely their contemporary, and (they hope) temporary.

(Concluded on page 423)

On the Track of What?

By DAVID TRIBE

In *The Puppeteers*, "an examination of those organisations and bodies concerned with the elimination of the white man in Africa", Harold Soref and Ian Greig mentioned a number of what they saw as dangerous Left-Wing organisations sharing "a large house in Prince of Wales Terrace, Kensington". Another has recently come to join them. It promises to be equally dangerous.

TRACK has four aims: "(1) To create an open and responsible approach to the possibilities of television and radio; (2) To stimulate informed exchanges among broadcasters and the public, and so raise standards of criticism on both sides; (3) To define the freedoms of broadcasters and to oppose any pressure which reduces them; (4) To examine new developments in broadcasting (e.g. local radio, the fourth channel) and to advocate forms of broadcasting which reflect the spirit of the above aims."

A press release states: "A body such as TRACK was first publicly proposed in a letter to the *Guardian* in July, signed by five TV writers. It dealt with dangers to British broadcasting from ill-informed and illiberal pressure groups. Assistance was offered by the British Humanist Association, which had itself been concerned about increasing pressures on broadcasting. This offer was accepted without prejudice to TRACK's independence; the committee has a broad representation of political and religious commitments, and includes two Roman Catholics." In fact, the Chairman told the launching press conference with a jolly friar grin that he was "a practising Roman Catholic with seven children".

The Chairman is Mr Roy Shaw, Director of Adult Education at Keele University; the Secretary, Tom Vernon, press officer of the British Humanist Association; the Treasurer, Alan Brownjohn, lecturer and writer, and Treasurer of the old Viewers' and Listeners' Association, whose name was borrowed — without permission — by Mrs Mary Whitehouse's supporters. The executive committee also includes teachers, critics, scriptwriters, and Professor Richard Hoggart and Mr Stuart Hall of the University of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. There is an Advisory Council of more critics and writers, trades unionists and MPs, composers and lecturers. There are standing committees and sub-committees on specific topics, and a category of nineteen founder-members, each of whom has contributed £5. One of the first national organisations to draw attention to the inherent dangers in the new Viewers' and Listeners' Association and point out the order of priorities in "disbelief, doubt and dirt", the National Secular Society, was not advised that this complex organisation was in process of being set up. Now that it is, a general membership (one guinea per year, students 7s. 6d.) is invited.

Despite the reference in the *Guardian* letter to "dangers to British broadcasting from ill-informed and illiberal pressure groups", which surely most, if not all, readers must have taken to be a reference to the clean-up campaigners, TRACK is at great pains to point out that it is not anti-MRA or even propagandist. Mrs Mary Whitehouse will be welcome to submit evidence to it. The Chairman said TRACK was as concerned with the "improvement" as with the freedom of broadcasting. All committee members present hastened to say they had no connection whatsoever with Mrs Avril Fox's Keep Television Free movement, now known as Cosmos. That, they said, was "propagandist and hoped for a mass membership". They were concerned to "investigate and

communicate facts". But it would not be accurate to describe them as "academic". "Expert and authoritative" were better adjectives.

I must at this stage record that a prior appointment necessitated my leaving the press conference before its conclusion. Towards the end uncertainties may have been resolved, clarification offered; though press comment elsewhere does not seem to indicate that this occurred. One thing was clear. Some members obviously intended to use the organisation in the battle of scriptwriters and story editors against directors. It is rumoured that others hope to use it to stop a further extension of commercial television and the introduction of (legal) commercial radio. Laudable as these aims may be, they seem to me to be trade union and political matters and rather different from what perusal of the stated aims might suggest to lay potential members.

What, in fact, does this perusal suggest? What is "an open and responsible approach" to broadcasting? From the same large house in Kensington we have had "an open educational approach" to religion in schools. In concrete terms this has recently turned out to mean "the Christian faith would remain in a privileged position . . . desirable against the background of opinion in this country" (*Religious and Moral Education*). Would "open" broadcasting apply the same criterion to disbelief and doubt? Or indeed to dirt? I see it reported — it was after I left — that the committee unanimously repudiated Kenneth Tynan's Anglo-Saxon, but that they "would not be demanding the resignation of the Director-General because of it". They would not be "demanding" anything, simply "investigating". There seems, however, little point in investigating unless recommendations are likely to ensue. Broadcasting organisations already have apparatus for audience research. Moreover, aim (3) seeks to "oppose any pressure" which reduces the "freedom of broadcasters" as TRACK may "define" them. But how will it define them?

In these days of ecumenical dialogue it will be seen as statesmanlike to combine Humanists and Christians in educational and broadcasting committees. Perhaps this was discussed at the projected Humanist-Vatican colloquium last November, which I have not at the time of writing heard more about. Up and down the country co-operative parish priests, nuns, Knights of St Columba, Legionnaires of Mary, Catholic Actionists, and "ordinary Catholics" are most desirous of helping out on library committees, borough and county councils, hospital management committees, the editorial staffs of publishers and opinion-forming journals, voluntary bodies concerned with cultural expression, Freedom from Hunger committees, Amnesty committees, radio and television organisations (Fr Agnellus Andrew, O.P., sometime Catholic commentator, has become a producer and now appears in *Radio Times* as plain Agnellus Andrews), trade union management committees, ward executives, tenants' associations taking over large areas "to fight Rachmanism", education committees, welfare services, mother and baby homes, old people's homes, departmental committees, benches of magistrates, Alcoholics, Narcotics and Neurotics Anonymous, parent-teacher associations, youth clubs, Duke of Edinburgh Award committees and adult education. I hope they will be happy in the large house in Kensington, where religious texts still adorn the leaded windows.

This Believing World

NO ONE who read—with understanding—the late Somerset Maugham's stories or saw his plays, could possibly have doubted his unbelief, and the *Daily Mail* (16/12/65) we were glad to see, bluntly called him "an Atheist" in its fine obituary notice by Peter Lewis. Maugham made no secret of the fact in his essays that he had no use for Christianity, or indeed for religion of any kind. Unlike some of our contemporary writers, Maugham concentrated his talents on pure story-telling, at which he had few masters. He based a good many of his stories on his own adventures in travelling which gave them extraordinary realism, and he was equally at home in the difficult arts of the short story and stage plays.

★

HOWEVER much the BBC is criticised, and some of its items often raise a howl of anger, no one can deny that at Christian festival periods it does its best for the Church. And in case one might miss an item, the *Radio Times* (8/12/65) gives a half page to its special programme of 27 items for the week before Xmas. There they are—Carols for Everybody, Carols from many churches, "Israel's Glory, Gentile's Light," Goodwill towards Men (in *Women's Hour*) Christmas Meditation, and so on.

★

FORTUNATELY for our sanity, these are well interspersed with the usual music, sports, plays, etc., most of them purely secular, and even on Christmas Eve we can switch to, say, the *Bruce Forsyth Show* or a "harmonic arrangement by the incomparable Larry Adler.

★

THAT WELL known broadcaster and writer, Brian Inglis, is quite sure that "people can talk without speaking" (*Daily Mail*, 11/65) because "identical twins can transmit brain-waves to each other." But there is a "long way" to go before ESP (extra-sensory perception) is fully understood." According to Mr. Inglis, animals can "communicate"; so can insects, and nearly all of us have had extra sensory experiences at some time of our lives. The proof? It is all in Rosalind Heywood's "entertaining" book, *The Infinite Hive*. Has somebody pinned down an "infinite" at last, then?

★

NEEDLESS TO add, of course, that the first great worker in ESP is Dr. J. B. Rhine, in spite of the fact that his own "researches" have been questioned over and over again by other researchers. Even Mr. Inglis admits that scientists jibbed at Rhine. But ESP is now, we are told, "admitted by all but a handful of diehards." Is it indeed!

★

THE LATEST change in the Prayer Book proposed by the Church of England is to include one for suicides (*Daily Express*, 17/12/65) who have hitherto been treated disgracefully in the matter of prayers. In fact, all suicides have been, so to speak, excommunicated. Now the Church wants God to treat suicides more mercifully "through Jesus Christ." In any case most of the prayers in the Prayer Book are unmitigated twaddle, and it is not surprising that even the Church cannot now swallow them. And the Tudor language is so archaic as to be funny. But then are not all prayers, recited so reverently to the wind, funny? Of what use are they? Perhaps only to keep churches going?

A Personal Note

By COLIN McCALL

THIS, the last issue of THE FREETHINKER for 1965, will be the last one to appear under my editorship. Pressure of other work has necessitated my resignation from a job that I have been proud to hold for nearly a decade.

It has not always been easy. I am more aware than anybody of the paper's deficiencies, but I would plead in self-defence that many of these could have overcome had the money been available. The regrettable fact is that the paper has to be run on a shoestring, and that articles cannot be paid for.

I should like, therefore, to express my gratitude to the many contributors who over the years, have kept THE FREETHINKER going. The oldest of them, 84-year-old Herbert Cutner, could always be depended on for This Believing World—which he has written since the days of Chapman Cohen—and for regular articles. F. A. Ridley, a former editor, has also appeared almost every week, generally as the writer of our Views and Opinions. C. Bradlaugh Bonner, president of the World Union of Freethinkers, has been another frequent contributor. And our finest stylist—certainly since the lamented death of Reginald Underwood—Oswell Blakeston, has kept us in touch with the world of literature and delighted us with his satire.

Lately, Miss Gillian Hawtin and Miss Phyllis Graham have considered the social and psychological effects of the Roman Catholic Church to which they formerly belonged. And two other women, Mrs. Margaret McIlroy and Mrs. Kit Mouat, have shown insight and sensitivity in approaching modern problems from a humanist standpoint.

Talking of ex-Catholics reminds me of the late inimitable Irish-Australian, Dr. J. V. Duhig, always to be relied on to shake the Papists—including his own Archbishop uncle. And Denis J. McConalogue, who has given me invaluable help behind the scenes, is another former member of the Church of Rome.

Until banned and silenced by the South African Government, Dr. Edward Roux, Professor of Botany at the University of the Witwatersrand, contributed many scientific articles in most readable form. F. H. Amphlett Micklewright has brought a keen legal mind and historical sense to bear upon aspects of contemporary life.

I should also like to thank our printer, Mr. William Wray, for his help and co-operation at all times. Most of all, though my thanks go to the board of G. W. Foote and Co. Ltd.—especially the chairman, William Griffiths and manager, Mrs. Ruby Siebert—for giving me a free hand as editor and support on the occasions when my policy has come under attack. And, perhaps, in conclusion, I should briefly state that policy. It has been to keep THE FREETHINKER independent and non-sectarian; to encourage—though not uncritically—all branches of the secular-humanist movement; to give expression to varied and opposing points of view when they seemed worth considering and were reasonably stated.

Aware that it is the only weekly freethought journal in the English-speaking world—with an international if not large readership—I have tried to keep it as topical as its printing schedule allowed and to avoid parochialism. I hope at least, that I have kept it lively.

My successor, David Tribe, has I know, livelier things in store, and I wish him every success.

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Lecture Notices, Etc.

Items for insertion in this column must reach THE FREETHINKER office at least ten days before the date of publication.

OUTDOOR

Edinburgh Branch NSS (The Mound)—Sunday afternoon and evening: MESSRS. CRONAN, McRAE and MURRAY.

London Branches—Marble Arch and North London: (Marble Arch), Sundays, from 4 p.m.: MESSRS. L. EBURY and C. B. WOOD.

(Tower Hill). Every Thursday, 12-2 p.m.: L. EBURY.

Manchester Branch NSS (Platt Fields), Sunday, 3 p.m.: MESSRS. CLARE, MILLS and WOOD. (Car Park, Victoria Street), 8 p.m.: MESSRS. COLLINS, WOODCOCK, and others.

Merseyside Branch NSS (Pierhead)—Meetings: Wednesdays, 1 p.m.: Sundays, 3 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

Nottingham Branch NSS (Old Market Square), every Friday, 1 p.m.: T. M. MOSLEY.

INDOOR

Brighton and Hove Humanist Group (Regency House, Oriental Place), Sunday, January 2nd, 5.30 p.m., "Any Questions."

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate), Sunday, January 2nd, 6.30 p.m., DAVID TRIBE "One Hundred Years of Secularism."

South Place Ethical Society (Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, London, WC1), Sunday, January 2nd, 11 a.m., DR. JOHN LEWIS, "God."

Tuesday, January 4th., 7.30 p.m., L. MINCHIN, "Paths to World Government."

Notes and News

WE ARE glad that John Allegro has spoken out again about the "emotional and religious" obstacles to an impartial study of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Edmund Wilson—in a series of *New Yorker* articles and in his book, *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea* (1955)—presented in clear terms the issues raised by the discoveries, and asked "whether the scholars who have been working on the Scrolls—so many of whom have taken Christian orders or been trained in the rabbinical tradition—may not have been somewhat inhibited... by their various religious commitments." Mr Wilson, it was said, was not a scholar but only a reporter. But what his critics overlooked was—as the late Dr. A. Powell Davies remarked (in another good popular work, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*)—that Mr. Wilson was a very good reporter who "transmitted quite correctly what the experts who have been working on the Scrolls have come to think about them".

★

MR. ALLEGRO himself was in "trouble" in 1956 when, in a BBC broadcast to the North of England, he mentioned that there was a reference to a crucifixion in a Scrolls commentary on Nathum, and he thought that the leader of the Essenes was probably the victim. The Dominican priest, Roland de Vaux, and the American Jesuit scholar Patrick Skehan, "felt it incumbent upon themselves to

write a disclaimer to the *Times* newspaper", as Mr. Allegro reminded us in a recent *New Statesman* article (17/12/65).

★

WE RECALL, too, that in 1958, Mr. Allegro told the *Sunday Express* of "some quite inexplicable delay in the publication of some of the findings in the Dead Sea Scrolls." He was not suggesting that there was "anything sinister" in the delay or that any material had been withheld. But then, he added, "with the present set-up," he had no means of knowing. That "set-up" was: five Roman Catholic priests, two Presbyterians, one Lutheran minister and just one agnostic—himself.

★

By "refusing to compromise their religious conception of Jesus as a completely unique God-man," wrote Mr. Allegro in the *New Statesman*, "the Christian scholars are in danger of erecting in their minds a mental barrier against the one line of inquiry that could lead to the long-awaited breakthrough in New Testament studies... the person and mind of Jesus are subjects with which they are understandably incapable of dealing with complete objectivity." We recall again Mr. Allegro's *Sunday Express* suggestion (12/1/58) that a fresh team should be appointed to edit the Scrolls and to ensure "unprejudiced reception for future discoveries." And that "responsibility for making the first inspection" should not "rest solely on the shoulders of Father de Vaux."

★

THE POPE is apparently taking no chances, writes Robert Halstead of Keighley (Yorks), who cites a *Peace News* report (5/11/65) of "what is undoubtedly a large nuclear fall-out shelter within the Vatican." Grass was being sown above it, but the concrete ramps were visible. "It was built by the present Pope on a site excavated during Pope John XXIII's pontificate for an extension to the Vatican museums."

★

"THAT makes you a Virgo," Hermoine Gingold was informed when she gave her birthday as the end of August. "That's clever of it," she commented. "Don't you believe in the stars?" she was asked. "Not to that extent" she replied. This was in *Pure Gingold*, a delightful series of programmes on BBC-2 which, on December 18th, contained skits on spiritualism, astrology and similar superstitions. We liked especially Miss Gingold's song, I am only a medium medium, in which she described being visited by "a lovely Indian brave, Who'd come hot foot from the grave." This is exactly how spiritualism deserves to be treated.

★

"WHERE is Dolores Hart to-day?" asked Alfred K. Allan in the December issue of the Maltese paper, *The Faith*. "You probably remember this radiant and delicate young actress for her deeply moving portrayal of St. Clare in the film *Francis of Assisi*..." Actually we don't, but then we never saw the film. "Of late," Mr. Allan continued, "you have probably noticed that this gifted and natural young actress has been missing from the screen." Again we have to disappoint him. There may, however, be some readers who did see *Francis of Assisi* and who have missed Dolores Hart. If so, they will be pleased to learn that there's "a good reason" for her absence from films. She has "turned her back on a glamorous and luxurious Hollywood career" and become a nun. Those who seek further details of Dolores Hart's "great courage and faith in the face of serious problems and difficulties" will find them in Mr. A. K. Allan's book *Catholics Courageous* We don't.

Irenaeus

By C. BRADLAUGH BONNER

[Another Early Christian Father; a note based on *Bulletin* 121 of the Cercle Ernest Renan by M. Guy Fau.]

IRENÆUS is a much-quoted author of whom very little is known for certain and whose works have been lost. Nevertheless, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* declares confidently that he was "Bishop of Lyons at the end of the second century" and "one of the most distinguished theologians of the ante-Nicene Church".

His importance for the orthodox lies in the claim that as a child he listened to Polycarp, and Polycarp was — so it is said — acquainted with the Apostle John. His importance for the student of Christian origins is that in the Latin version of his *Refutations and Overthrow of Gnosis*, usually referred to by the abbreviation *Adv. Haer.*, much information on the Gnostic beliefs is to be found. This Latin version was known in the fifth century, but meets with no earlier mention. The commonly accepted details of his life are derived from Eusebius, a dubious source, and from Hippolytus, claimed to be his disciple. It is Eusebius who declares that "Pothinus, having attained 90 years of age, was martyred, and succeeded as Bishop of Lyons by Irenaeus" (*Hist. Eccl.*, vv. 5-8). Hippolytus calls Irenaeus a presbyter. If Irenaeus was born c. 130 AD, there were then not bishops (*episcopoi*) but Elders governing Christian communities. Irenaeus, as far as can be judged, was born in Asia Minor and wrote in Greek. M. Georges Ory asks if a confusion did not arise between Gaul and Galatia, in those days called by the same name in Latin, i.e. Gallia.

Briefly, we do not know for sure when Irenaeus was born, whether he wrote about 180 AD, or where he dwelt. His link with an Apostle can be dismissed as wishful thinking. The information, however, which is given in the Latin text ascribed to him is of the greatest interest, and would have, if we could be sure of the authenticity and date of *Adv. Haer.*, the greatest importance. The author claims to have known Mark, a leading disciple of the Gnostic Valentinus (who lived c. 150), and also to be well acquainted with the doctrines of Marcion, a contemporary of Valentinus. His work is a principal source of information concerning these arch-heretics. It has been claimed that Tertullian (160 - 230 AD) drew on *Adv. Haer.* in his writings against the Gnostics; it has also been held firmly that much of *Adv. Haer.* was drawn from Tertullian. Epiphanius, who lived two centuries after Irenaeus, and who also wrote against the Gnostics, includes what purports to be part of Book 1 of *Adv. Haer.* in his *Panarion* in Greek; and Hippolytus, writing c. 225, gives summaries of *Adv. Haer.* which are in agreement with the Latin text.

Gnostic writings would seem to have been well-known at the time Irenaeus and Tertullian were attacking them. Since then they have entirely disappeared. *Adv. Haer.* opens with this declaration: "I have judged it necessary, after having read the commentaries of the disciples, as they call themselves, of Valentinus, having also met some of them and become acquainted with their ideas, to reveal to you their prodigious and very profound mysteries." If only we could be certain today that this work attributed to Irenaeus as written c. 180 AD were utterly authentic, it would be very precious indeed. If only we could trust any uncorroborated statement in Eusebius's *History of the Church*! We should all then be orthodox believers! We

should then know that Irenaeus wrote a letter to his friend Florinus in which he recalls memories of his childhood: "I can tell you just where the blessed Polycarp used to sit and talk, where he used to go and the manner of his life." We should also note that Jesus Christ died at the age of fifty, according to the Apostle John; that, although Irenaeus knew the names of the *episcopoi* (popes?) of Rome, he did not know who was the successor at Smyrna of his master Polycarp. Again he is apparently opposed to Polycarp on the question of Easter. His one reference to the Apostle Peter is to declare that he was, with Paul, the founder of the Church of Rome.

What do we learn of the Gnostics whom Irenaeus attacked? "Know that all these who adulterate the truth and injure the teaching of the Church are the disciples and successors of Simon, the Samaritan Magus. Although they do not admit the name of their master, they teach his doctrine and put forward the name of Christ Jesus as a screen for the impious teachings of Simon." This Simon, moreover, claimed to be "the most sublime power, i.e. the Father above all".

It was within the Church that Marcion and Valentinus preached their doctrine of the celestial Christ. In these doctrines they "mingled lime with the milk of God". Furthermore "we are going to show that they are atheists, drawing the wisdom of their systems from Greek wisdom and from the philosophers, as well as from the Mysteries." He also quotes from what is now looked upon as the Pauline Epistles as examples of Gnostic teaching (1 Cor. 2, 6; 1, 18, etc.).

What did these arch-heretics teach? That there were Good and Bad Powers, one of whom, said Marcion, was the Jewish Creator. Jesus Christ was not a man, but a spirit sent by the Power of Good to save mankind from the Powers of Evil, including Jehovah. Valentinus thought there were Thirty Powers (Aeons), male and female, guardians of the Pleroma (Heaven), among whom were Horus, Christ, the Holy Ghost and also Jesus. Christ was the Prince of the Aeons and was sent down to earth by the Supreme Deity to save mankind, and was destroyed by the God of the Jews. All this in the century following on the pretended crucifixion of Jesus Christ. No wonder Eusebius required a link with the Apostles who lived at that time.

FORUM

RELIGION IN THE SCHOOL

Alliance Hall, Caxton Street, London, S.W.1, Tuesday, January 18th, 1966 7.45 p.m. Speakers include Ernest Armstrong MP, R. Gresham Cooke MP, David Tribe. Written questions to the organisers: National Secular Society, 103 Borough High Street, London, S.E.1.

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Journey with a Clergyman

By DENIS WATKINS

THERE were two of us in the carriage. The clergyman was reading *The Conscience of the Rich* by C. P. Snow and I was reading *Why I am not a Christian* by Bertrand Russell.

For most of the journey neither of us spoke. Then the clergyman said: "And do you find yourself able to accept what he has to say?"

"I find him persuasive and convincing," I replied.

The clergyman laid down his book. "More so than the Bible perhaps?"

"I find the Bible neither persuasive nor convincing," I said.

He smiled and said quietly, "Maybe you are not attuned to its message."

"That is probable," I agreed.

"It is a precious one if you can accept it," he went on. "Perhaps your view has been distorted by works such as the one you are reading. It would be a great pity if it prevented you from doing justice to one of the greatest books of all time."

"I find this book reasonable and the Bible unreasonable."

"I can understand that. Works such as *Why I am not a Christian* present a specious logic which is readily attractive. But the Bible has vast reserves of wisdom as well as the power to sustain and strengthen human beings."

"So has Shakespeare."

The clergyman shook his head slightly. "But, my friend, you are missing out. Believe me, you really are. The Bible is uniquely charged with the power of the Holy Spirit. However, if it is to affect you personally you must yield yourself up to it. Once it touches you and you get things in focus you will see what I mean."

"I prefer to remain with Bertrand Russell."

"I know the book is seductive but reason is not all. Keep an open mind. Please do not shut out God. Do not become the prisoner of superficially attractive ideas. You will find that what is offered by books such as that cannot satisfy your deepest needs."

The train stopped at my station.

"So you cannot agree with the views in *Why I am not a Christian*?" I said as I was leaving.

"I'm afraid I have not read the book," he replied.

CHRISTIANITY: EARLY DERIVATIONS AND FUTURE INTENTIONS

(Concluded from page 418)

de facto situation. And, to be truthful, even freethinkers may be forgiven for preferring bishops who talk like bishops, instead of singing the songs of the Lord to the new "pop" tunes, in both literal and metaphorical senses!

If Christianity is supposed to be a vital reality in the hearts and homes of the people, it is a little surprising that after two thousand years incursions of the clergy into our secular midst such as worker-priests, are still needed to demonstrate these undoubted benefits. If the religion is sound to enrich our lives below, and ensure eternal life hereafter, it is astonishing that men, with their innate love of a bargain, have so to be canvassed.

Not that the modern so-called "open society" is *per se* inimicable to the Church. Catholic sociology is indifferent to forms of government so long as they permit it to flourish.

"For forms of government, let fools contest," the Roman Catholic, Alexander Pope, wrote. However, even if we

regard the Church as a voluntary society, we should not forget that *she* does not, in theory, relinquish her claim on us. It is worth our while to examine her as a power claiming divine authority present in a society which, like our own, argues only secular foundations. We should not succumb to their trick of pointing out individual Church leaders as conspicuous in, for example, political activities; it may blind us to the more pervasive influence of the total organisation. It is worth our while, too, to consider the unit of which this ecclesiastical hegemony is composed, viz. the family, and their views of it as having a divine origin. The consideration, and the rejection of this view, will leave us the clearer-headed concerning our own ideas of the family as essentially a human institution, biological and social.

It is most important to be clear-headed in our theory here, because from these views follow our views on the great controversy of denominational education. We should not forget, moreover, that failing an appeal to the Bible and tradition, the Churches are more and more propagating the *ideas* of Christianity (on these and every topic), views based, in fact, on Bible and tradition, but without giving chapter and verse. The churchman believes these truths are of God, so must stand, even if let loose upon society without their labels. It behoves us to be discerning, for there are false teachers among us.

PAGAN CHRISTMAS

NOW THAT Christmas is over we wonder how many fervent Christians realise that they have been celebrating (as countless of their ancestors had done) a Pagan holiday? Its Yule log, and the giving of presents, are relics of the old Norse religion in which Baldur and Odin played big parts and, as has been pointed out even by Christian historians, the early Christians "unable to eradicate the old ideas were driven to the expedient of trying to give them a colouring of Christianity."

NEUTRAL ?

A "neutral" religious building will be erected at Church-hill College, sometime in the spring . . . and will represent a qualified triumph for the college's most determined pressure group, the practising Christians . . . The only Christian symbol will probably be a cruxifix on a central altar.

—*The Sunday Times* (19/12/65)

A neutral cruxifix, no doubt!

COINCIDENCE ?

A FEW weeks ago (9/11/65) the *Liverpool Daily Post* recounted a "chain of unhappy coincidence" vouched for by one of the choristers at Christ Church, Waterloo, where it all happened the previous Sunday. Evensong had just reached the point in the *Nunc Dimittis* which runs: "a light to lighten the Gentiles", when the Church was plunged into darkness. Only a faint gleam of light came from a few bulbs in the centre of the building. To make matters worse, not only did the service next proceed to the prayer "Lighten our darkness we beseech Thee O Lord", but the choice of the closing hymn was "Hail Gladdening Light". The choir were only glad, the *Daily Post* added, "to hide their confusion in the vestry, where they removed their surplices to the miserable light of a few matches".

*A Happy New Year
to our Readers*

CORRESPONDENCE

RECIPROCATION

AFTER long heated debates, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, finally decided to acquit the Jews of any guilt in the death of Jesus. No doubt, such an acquittal must cause rejoicing in certain circles, and one good turn deserves another. Therefore to create more harmony in this believing world, the Jews ought to see it fit, to declare the Catholic Church blameless for the death of thousands of Jews by torture and fire during the Inquisition.

ELMER K. HANSEN
(British Virgin Islands)

A GRAVE INSULT TO THE POPE

AS A SHORT answer to Miss Phyllis K. Graham's article (November 26th), I feel inclined to invite her to reflect on the grave and most offensive title she has repeatedly given to His Holiness the Pope, by calling him "The Leopard in a New suit."

It would have been criminally grave enough to use such language against the man in the street. She knows that the Pope besides being the religious head of more than five million Catholics he is also a head of state of the Vatican City. He is in harmonious and peaceful (not to say cordial) relations with England and almost all the civilised states of the world. He is a man of peace in all his life, but especially now as the representative of Him who is known as *Princeps Pacis*, the Prince of Peace. His "message of peace" delivered at the general assembly of the UNO, after invitation of its Secretary General, was applauded by all present, even by the atheists. Why then offend the Pope by calling him "The Leopard in a new suit"? Is that a sign of decency? of education? or rather a sign of blind hatred?

Millions and millions of people, all over the world, would show sympathy with the Pope, had they been able to know the show hurled against him by Miss Phyllis and the Freethinker. She could not have attacked a more universally beloved man than she did. I am sure that, on sincerely reflecting, Miss Graham would feel sorry.

My last word is that we ought all to respect and love one another. God is love, and those who truly love are in God and God in them. Love is constructive: hatred destructive: If we cannot agree in mind, let us, at least, agree in heart. An intellectual error is not necessarily morally guilty, but even the least movement of hatred is.

G. M. PARIS, OP
(Malta)

[Love, like charity, should begin at home. We suggest that father Paris should ask his hierarchy to show constructive love towards the Maltese Labour Party.—ED.]

A PART TO PLAY?

A LETTER by Kenneth J. Ead in the issue of November 26th afforded me much interest and food for thought. I am sure he voices the problem of many whose educational standards ceased at primary school level. It is very evident however that he has, like myself and many others put his learning to good purpose inasmuch as he has learned to read wisely, widely and well, and that is no mean achievement. I too sometimes find articles in both "Freethinker" and "Humanist" far above my intellectual understanding, but your correspondent does not lack intelligence, and although he like myself lacks that polish and vocabulary that makes the scholar, he has understood the implications of what he has read, and this has shaped his thinking accordingly. Like him we are impatient at the slow progress we are making towards that mental freedom which unbelief in the supernatural brings to all. I find, after reading the findings of scientists in the fields of biology, astronomy, geology and many others, no difficulty in postulating a natural universe, independent of supernatural agency. I do not pretend to know anything, or at most very little of any of these complex sciences, indeed it is not necessary. I am sure that your correspondent has sufficient knowledge to sow the seeds of doubt amongst his own circle of believers of religious twaddle. He can safely leave the vital problems such as secular education, birth control and a code of humanist ethics to the experts in these fields. He can best further the cause by joining a branch of the National Secular Society or British Humanist Association and be as generous as he can afford in financial support. Occasions frequently arise when a letter to the editor of the local press has useful results. In this way he can help to undermine the stranglehold that religion has on radio, television and press.

Kenneth strikes a rather pessimistic note in his letter, but I am of opinion that the power of organised religion is declining. This is especially to be noted in the more intelligent and thoughtful of our young people excluding that relatively small section

making up the "mods" and "rockers". We are approaching a healthy attitude towards subjects like sex, birth control, abortion and others which a few years ago were "taboo". The results of the so called Christian ethic and moral teaching is amply reflected in the crime statistics. We see its failure on every side. All of us Atheists share his disgust at the debasing effects of religious beliefs and with that in mind, we of little can do something, even if it be ever so little to further the cause of unbelief and a secular and humanist code of morals.

May I add in conclusion for Kenneth's information that I am a product of the early years of compulsory education and my school days ended at 12 years of age. I regard as my greatest achievement the ability to read and write intelligibly. At 85 years of age I regard this little achievement as the one which has added much to make for my present day philosophy. Take courage Kenneth and keep on the road you are treading and help others to share your journey.

FREDERICK E. PAPPS

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